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#64

# HorrorHound™

THE HORROR FAN'S MAGAZINE!

KONG  
SKULL ISLAND  
A LOOK INTO THE  
NEW KONG FILM!



Meet the new host  
of MST3K: Jonah Ray

MYSTERY SCIENCE THEATER 3000  
A HORRORHOUND RETROSPECTIVE

THE SERIES RETURNS TO TV  
EXCLUSIVE HOST INTERVIEWS

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HorrorHound #64 March/April 2017  
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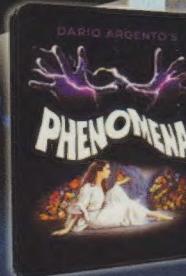
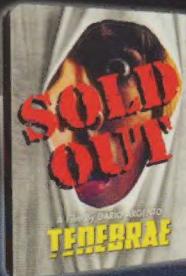
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Interview with MST3K  
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MYSTERY SCIENCE THEATER 3000  
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MYSTERY  
SCIENCE  
THEATER  
3000

THE SERIES RETURNS TO TV  
EXCLUSIVE HOST INTERVIEWS

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# HorrorHounds

HorrorHound LTD.  
P.O. Box 710  
Milford, OH 45150

## THE HORRORHOUND STAFF

Publisher  
JEREMY SHELDON

Editor-in-Chief  
NATHAN HANNEMAN

Managing Editor  
AARON CROWELL

### Writers

DEAN BOOR, TREVOR COLLINS,  
MICHELLE CONTY, JESSICA DWYER,  
SHANNA EDWARDS, DUSTIN  
FREGIATO, JASON HIGNITE, JAY KAY,  
JON KITLEY, AUDERY LANE,  
KYLE SCHARF, JERRY SMITH,  
BRANDEN YATES

Copy Editors  
JESSICA HANNEMAN,  
SHANNA EDWARDS

Artists  
TIM FRANCIS, JEFF REBNER

Advertising Manager  
ERIC AUSTIN  
ads@horrorhound.com

### Contributors & Thanks:

CAMELIA ADIBI, ERIKA AYRES, SARAH H.  
DE BRUIN, TOM CHEN, AARON CHRIS-  
TENSEN, SEAN CLARK, RANDY FALK,  
DANIEL GRIFFITH, MARK HAMMERMEIS-  
TER, JASON "JINX" JENKINS, JASON  
KRETEN, FREDDY MORRIS, KENNETH  
NELSON, ROBERT PATTERSON, DEBORAH  
PETERS, ED PETERS, TATUM WAN,  
& TOMART PUBLISHING.

Plus everyone else who helped, but  
were unable to be named here.

All articles written by Aaron Crowell and  
Nathan Hanneman unless noted otherwise.

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# LETTERS • LETTERS • LETTERS • LETTERS

Dear HorrorHound,

You are BY FAR my favorite horror mag of all time! I've been a fan since issue #1. I especially like the Toy News, Horror's Hallowed Grounds, and Hall of Fame sections of your magazine. Since Carrie is 40 this year, I included a pic of my killer Carrie tattoo (artist: Giuseppe D'alessio of Zone B in Deptford, New Jersey) and myself with



different Carrie cast members over the years ... Piper Laurie, Nancy Allen, Betty Buckley, PJ Soles, and William Katt (still waiting to meet Sissy). Maybe you can get her for HorrorHound Weekend ... lol ... keep up the great work!

Lon Patello

Hey guys! Really appreciate all the hard work that you all put into the best horror magazine ever made! Here are a couple of new tattoos I recently got to work on and an illustration of 8-bit Jason Voorhees (more of my work can be seen at [Instagram.com/ihatemilkalot](https://Instagram.com/ihatemilkalot)). It's always cool seeing everyone's fan submissions and



to hear everyone's input on which films they're into. Hope everyone at HorrorHound has a killer day!

Chris "ThrashHeavy" de Leon

So, just picked up my first HorrorHound in a long time. I can't believe I ever let this magazine not be a part of my life after going to the HorrorHound con in 2007 and having my Billy the puppet tattoo featured in issue #14. Anyway, I loved the retrospective on Mars Attacks. It brought back so many memories as a kid having the cards and dragging my parents to see the movie for my birthday. So, I thought I'd share my tattoo of the Martians I got this year, done by Chris Akins working out of Area 51 Tattoo in Springfield, Oregon. I love it, thought you might as well.

Kyle Brown



Hello HorrorHound, this is Xavier. I love this magazine. Just saw *Don't Be Afraid of the Dark* and loved it. I always look forward to the Toy News part of the magazine. I even have some of the stuff you show. I also can't wait for *The Bye Bye Man*, *Alien: Covenant*, and also *Resident Evil: The Final Chapter*. By the way, how do you guys find some of the toys you show in your magazine?

Xavier Urban

Thanks for the letter, Xavier. Believe it or not, editors Nathan Hanneman and Aaron Crowell worked in and around the toy industry for a combined 15-plus years prior to launching HorrorHound. So, we have a good history of keeping our ears to the ground in regards to cool toy news and announcements. Most of what's shown in HorrorHound can also be purchased on Web sites like [AmokTime.com](http://AmokTime.com) - HH

**Write to HorrorHound:** We want to share your fan art, your latest tattoos, and your musings on the latest horror movies. E-mail us at [mail@horrorhound.com](mailto:mail@horrorhound.com) and we may print your letter in an upcoming issue of HorrorHound!

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Former MST3K  
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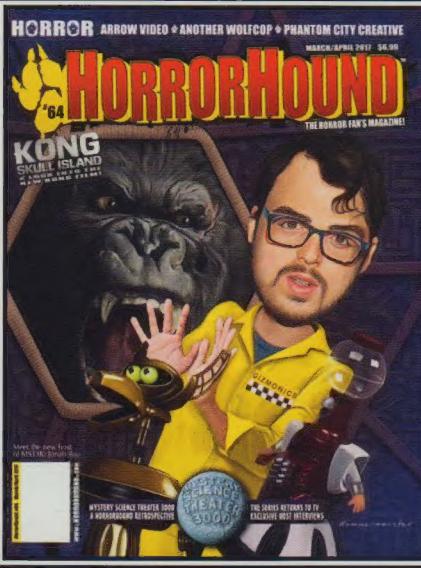
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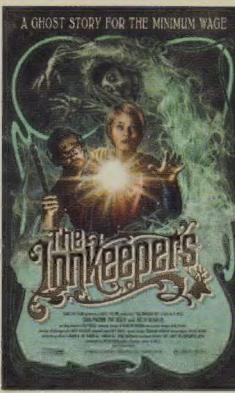
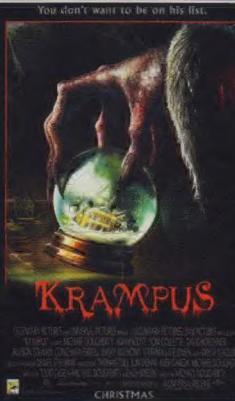
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MST3K cover(s) by Mark Hammermeister

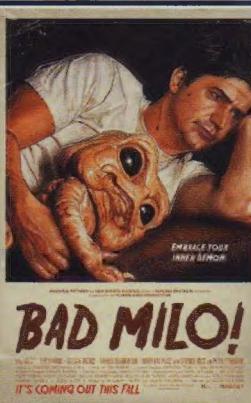
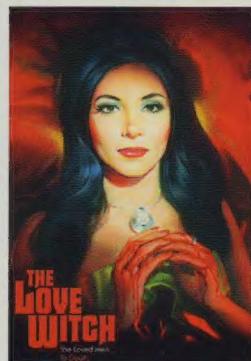


### Letter from the Editor:

This issue features a number of articles revolving around the amazing modern craze of "alternative movie posters." This independent scene of artistic-driven poster art can be attributed to the increased impact of the Alamo Drafthouse, the consistent growth in home video from companies such as Criterion, Arrow Video, and Shout! Factory, and the equally important effect such artwork has had on the vinyl record scene, including companies like Waxwork and Death Waltz. This glut of original art-driven products (which is even trickling down to toy shelves as artists Jason Edmiston, Ed Repka, and Nathan Milliner have found themselves providing package designs for companies such as NECA Toys and Super7). What is most important – and something we hope sees a continued push – is the return to form for major studios who have begun to re-embrace original, painted (even digitally painted), but most importantly beautiful and memorable movie posters and one-sheets. Especially in terms of current IMAX original poster releases.

In recent years we have seen artists like Tom Hodge find themselves at the forefront of original movie poster designs (with films like *Hobo with a Shotgun* and *Wolfcop*). The recent film *Kong: Skull Island* delivered some of the greatest modern poster art we have seen by a major studio in some time. Does this mean studios have finally subscribed to the alternative movie poster trend that fans have embraced so much? We hope so. It's wonderful to walk into a theater and see some of these beautiful one-sheets staring back at us. Shown here are six of my favorite modern horror posters that have truly captured the feel of classic poster art. We can only hope to see more.

– Nathan Hanneman (EIC)



## IN MEMORIAM

John Hurt (1940-2017)

Actor from *Alien*, *Hellboy*, and *The Elephant Man*.

Miguel Ferrer (1955-2017)

Actor from *RoboCop*, *DeepStar Six*, and *Twin Peaks*.

William Peter Blatty (1928-2017)

Writer of *The Exorcist* films, director of *The Exorcist III*.

George Kosan (1935-2016)

Actor from *Night of the Living Dead*.

Send us pictures of your best fan art, plus a bit of text explaining it, and we may print your pictures in the next issue of *HorrorHound Magazine*! E-mail us at mail@horrorhound.com!



**TV News:** Syfy revealed that the surprise-hit anthology TV series *Channel Zero* will not only receive a second season this fall (titled "No-End House"), but the show has been received an additional two-season pickup!



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## MONKEY BUSINESS ON SKULL ISLAND

by Jessica Dwyer

*Kong: Skull Island* is the next chapter in a long legacy started by one of the greatest monster movies of all time, *King Kong*. Released back in 1933, the giant ape went on to inspire not only the over-sized monster movie and creature feature craze in cinema over the next 80-plus years, but single-handedly birthed a new era of special-effects artistry.

At its core, *King Kong* tells the story of a beauty meeting a beast, but there's so much more happening than just a giant ape falling in love with a girl. At its heart, the story showcases what happens when mankind messes with nature and how we wind up destroying those mysteries rather than learning from them. It's a classic feature film filled with horror, adventure, and dinosaurs. It's every kid's dream and the big ape is coming back for more.

*Kong: Skull Island* is the latest iteration of the Kong mythos, this time following a diverse team of scientists, soldiers, and adventurers who have united to explore a mythical, uncharted island in the Pacific, as dangerous as it is beautiful. Cut off from everything they know, the team ventures into the domain of the mighty "Kong," igniting the ultimate battle between man and nature. As their mission of discovery becomes one of survival, they must fight to escape a primal Eden in which humanity



does not belong.

The film boasts a cast list that's just as big as Kong himself, with Tom Hiddleston (*Thor*), Samuel L. Jackson (*Pulp Fiction*), John Goodman (*10 Cloverfield Lane*), and recent Oscar winner Brie Larson (*Room*). Jing Tian (*Police Story: Lockdown*), Toby Kebbell (*Dawn of the Planet of the Apes*), and John Ortiz (*Steve Jobs*) also star, along

with both Corey Hawkins and Jason Mitchell (*Straight Outta Compton*), Shea Whigham (*The Wolf of Wall Street*), Thomas Mann (*Me and Earl and the Dying Girl*), and Oscar nominee John C. Reilly (*Step Brothers*). As said, the cast is insane. All the more impressive is that this mega film is directed by modestly new feature-film director Jordan Vogt-Roberts (*The Kings of Summer*).

*Kong: Skull Island* isn't a sequel to Peter Jackson's remake from a few years ago (so we can go ahead and forget about that installment). Instead, Legendary and Warner Brothers have teamed up to reintroduce Kong as a larger-than-ever threat to the outside world and set it in the 1970s (ironically, the same time period as the film version which starred Jeff Bridges and was the first starring role for Jessica Lange). If the *Apocalypse Now* homage in the IMAX poster didn't give it away, a lot of the characters, including Tom Hiddleston's soldier, Captain James Conrad, are all trying to come to terms with the war in Vietnam.

This new Kong story also has a lot to do with the environment and mankind's treading where it doesn't belong (something carried over from the Bridges/Lange film) with Brie Larson's character, Weaver, appearing as a photojournalist and activist. Something echoed by the director, Jordan Vogt-Roberts, "A big part of this film is about the arrogance of man, about man and nature, and the way we co-exist with our environment. Not just in terms of the way we grow and the way we've evolved, but in terms of our relationship with technology." He stated, while handling press at one of the studio's only publicity appearances, the San Diego Comic-Con, "This film is about the loss of myth. We live in a time where everything's accessible to us through our cell phones at any given moment. Part of the reason we set this in

Meet Kong ...

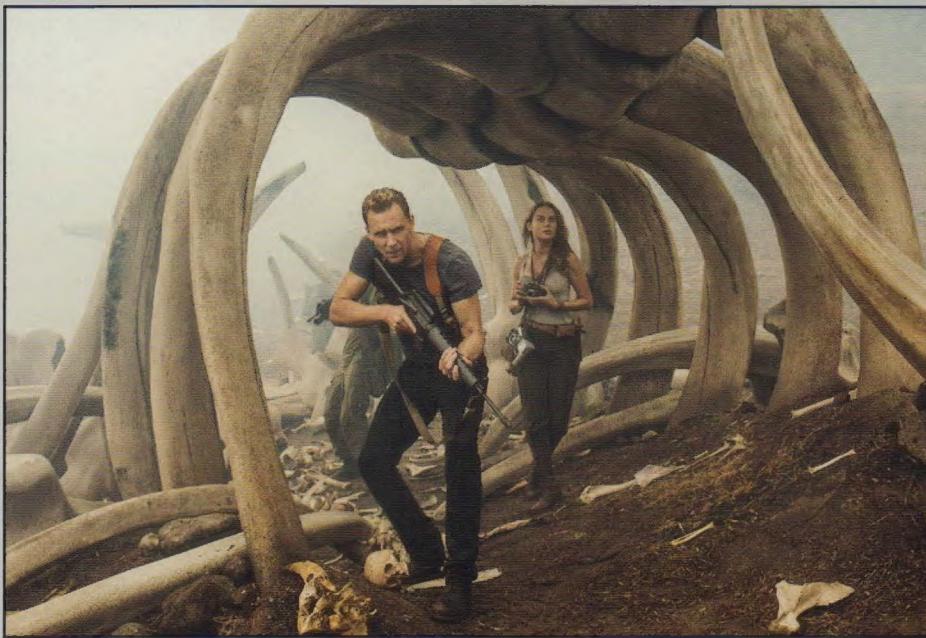


## COLLECTING KONG:

Over the past 80-plus years, there have been some mighty impressive *King Kong* merchandise. Collectors of the Kong are often trying to track down the rarest and coolest of the merchandise available. Shown at right is HorrorHound's pick for the ten coolest Kong collectibles horror fiends can track down. These include the Sideshow Collectibles-produced Kong Armature, an Aurora model kit, a mini-jungle playset, a Soakie, and (of course), the beastly Barbie set.



**Movie News:** It was announced that Netflix has acquired the rights to director Jeremy Saulnier's (*Green Room*) next film project, *Hold the Dark*, which is set to star Alexander Skarsgård, Jeffrey Wright, and James Badge Dale



the '70s is because that wasn't the case, and this was actually the start of the modern technology that brought us here. Taking a bunch of characters and confronting them with myth and their own arrogance is a big part of *Skull Island*."

During this press blitz, Tom Hiddleston delivered a bit more in-depth detail to the story in terms of who's who: "I play a character called Captain James Conrad," he began, "and he is a former British SAS officer with the specialist skills of tracking and jungle survival. A very unique set of skills. It's interesting, because the expedition that all the characters go on, we're all given a pitch. The technology that we now use, maps like Google Earth, was in its infancy in the early '70s, and NASA had something called Landsat that they were taking pictures of the earth from space."

"They're taking pictures of an island in the South Pacific and it's protected by a storm system and they can't get into that storm system, so they send in a group of soldiers and explorers and a war photographer played by Brie." The actor continues, "Samuel L. Jackson plays a lieutenant colonel of an Air Camp Brigade, he's commander in the sky, and Captain Conrad is

the commander on the ground. As for the rest, you'll have to wait and see!"

One thing that really has fans intrigued, of course, is the fact that Legendary not only has the rights to Kong, but Godzilla as well. Since *Kong: Skull Island* is set much closer in time than its original 1930s era to our latest modern *Godzilla*, it begs for some questions to be answered in regards to the film everyone's already been told is happening – *Kong vs. Godzilla*, a title that's been announced for release in 2020.

It sounds like those questions were echoed by *Skull Island*'s filmmakers as well. Director Vogt-Roberts said, "There are size

aspects in relation to what Kong and Godzilla are, and how they would fight each other. Our Kong is naturally one of the biggest that we've seen, and we're going back to the 1933 version where he's a bipedal ape, as opposed to the more anatomically correct gorilla." That being said, there's a lot more going on in this movie than you'd suspect when it comes to special effects. The giant monsters find their homes in real locations.

"It was important, because they're dealing with all these CG creatures and Kong, to put them in a real place," Vogt-Roberts explains, "There's so much CG in movies these days, so I think audiences know when stuff feels fake. We all grew up and fell in love with movies that were tactile and real. So, we wanted to take this amazing cast, and put them in a real place, so the majority of what you're looking at is real."

We know that *Godzilla: King of the Monsters* is coming in 2019 (directed by *Trick 'r Treat*'s Michael Daugherty), to be followed by the battle royale that will be *Godzilla vs. King Kong*. We also know (thanks to the trailer shown at SDCC) that Godzilla isn't going to be alone in his second feature (hints of Rodan, Mothra, and others were boasted), so what's to say Kong will be by himself as the credits roll? Legendary has cornered the market on giant-monster movies, so it's only a matter of time before we potentially see all monsters attack on the big screen. Until then, fans can see Kong tear things up in cinemas come March 10th. 

Brie Larson and Tom Hiddleston in *Kong: Skull Island*.



**Movie News:** It was announced that director Corin Hardy (*The Hallow*) has been pegged to helm the upcoming *The Conjuring* spin-off *The Nun*, based on a script by Gary Dauberman and James Wan.

## KONG IN CINEMA:

Since Kong first appeared on the big screen in Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack's 1933 classic, the giant beast has been featured in quite a number of film and television projects. Here's a quick guide to help bring you up to speed:

### *Son of Kong* (1933)

The sequel to the original Kong didn't actually have the iconic ape in it but did feature the return of director Carl Denham, finding his way back to the original feature's island and discovering Kong's much nicer son. It's a disappointing follow-up to such a classic but worth seeing for the historical aspect alone.

### *King Kong vs. Godzilla* (1962)

Yes, this face-off happened once already, as we in the monster business well know. Toho Studios and Universal teamed up on this oddball entry in which Kong's look is very different than what we're used to seeing (thanks in large part to the character now being a man in a gorilla

suit). Interesting fact – original special-effects artist Willis O'Brien had planned on producing a *King Kong versus Frankenstein* film, but after studio and script tampering, the proposed project wound up becoming *King Kong vs. Godzilla* with O'Brien being cut out of the film and credit for it entirely. Additional aspects of O'Brien's idea was later bastardized in the Japanese-produced *Frankenstein Conquers the World* (1965).

### *King Kong Escapes* (1967)

Another Japanese production, this sequel to *KvG* saw the monster-ape fighting a robotic replica of itself (in similar fashion to G-Man's later-introduced Mechagodzilla in 1974).



### *The King Kong Show* (1966)

Rankin/Bass kicked off an animated television series revolving around a blue-furred Kong as he befriends the Bond family – specifically young son Bobby – as they go on zany adventures. The series capitalized off TV's newfound love of rediscovered classics.

### *King Kong* (1976)

One of the best-known entries in the Kong catalog, the 1976 film produced by Dino De Laurentiis had an all-star cast (Jessica Lange, Jeff Bridges) and featured special effects co-created by Rick Baker (who also performed as Kong) and Rob Bottin. The film is all about man's greed for oil – instead of the Empire State Building being the film's finale, it was the World Trade Center.



The odd thing about the 76-minute film is that the TV version included extended scenes (as is sometimes the case) that were cut from the theatrical version.

### *King Kong Lives* (1986)

Starring Linda Hamilton, this off-the-wall sequel doesn't receive a lot of love in the Kong world. Taking place 10 years after the first film, Kong actually finds ape love in this feature, after receiving a heart transplant (post injuries from the 1976 film). Believe it or not, there were actually two video games released in Japan based off of the film that were never released here

in the States. Sadly, this film ended up being a massive flop, making back only a third of its budget.

### *Kong: The Animated Series* (2000)

This is an odd one. A scientist clones Kong using her grandson's DNA which causes the big ape and the kid to have a mental connection. This animated television series was released prior to the Peter Jackson film funny enough, but lasted 40 episodes.

### *King Kong* (2005)

Peter Jackson LOVES Kong and this movie shows just how much. It's a beautiful retelling of the story and is filled with every possible sort of nasty creature you can imagine – and dinosaurs too. Sadly, the CGI featured predominantly in this film became dated fast.

### *Kong: King of the Apes* (2016)

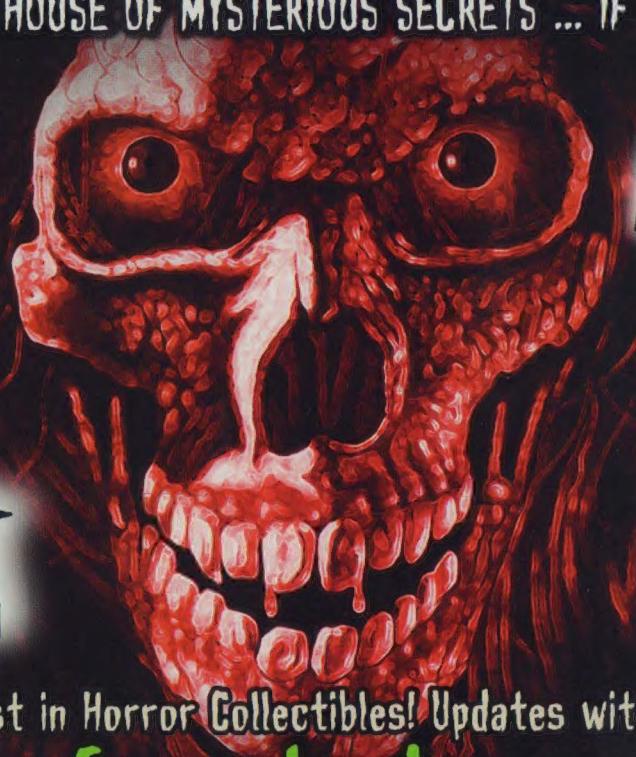
The newest entry in the Kong cartoon arsenal. This Netflix exclusive is set in the year 2050 and has Kong being chased for a crime he didn't commit. He is, of course, aided by some sympathetic children. \*

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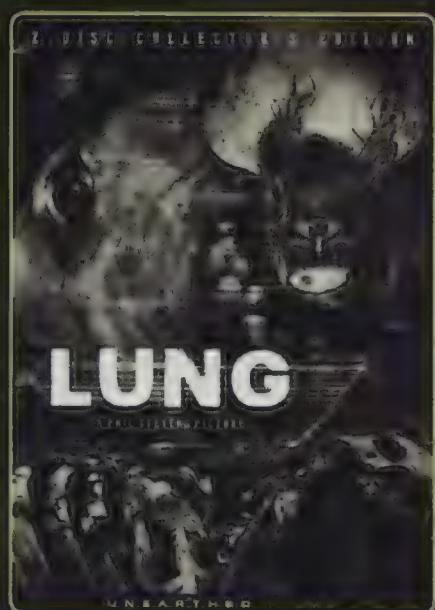
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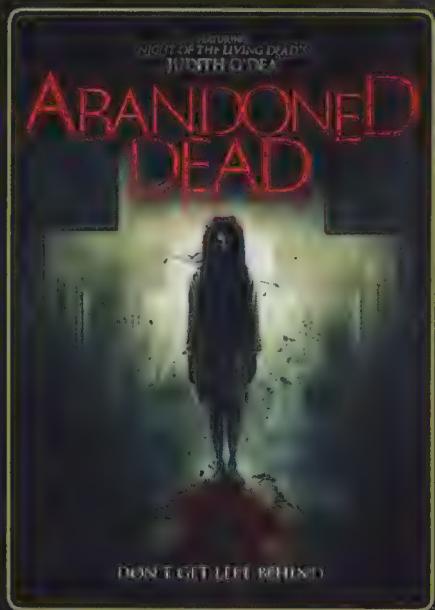
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## KILLER JOB: THE BELKO EXPERIMENT

by Jessica Dwyer

Men and women being forced to fight to the death is not a new concept in cinema. Be it *The Running Man*, *Battle Royale*, *Hunger Games* ... the idea always makes for an interesting look into a society where the horror is really based on how close we actually are to this fiction. Writer and producer James Gunn, now more well-known for his work with Marvel's *Guardians of the Galaxy*, is no stranger to fictionalizing those would-be horrors. He got his start in cinema, writing such films as *Tromeo and Juliet*, *Dawn of the Dead* (2004), and *Slither* (which he also directed). Now, he has put together a nasty little bit of office drama called *The Belko Experiment*.

Directed by *Wolf Creek*'s Greg McLean, *The Belko Experiment* takes place in Bogotá, Columbia, where the Belko Company acts as a transitional service for out-of-country workers. One day, all local hires are told to stay home, leaving 80 employees left in the building. Suddenly, the complex is completely sealed as a voice instructs employees to kill each other. If they refuse? Everyone dies. Naturally, in films like these, the employees learn quickly that this is no joke – and that's when the darker side of human nature shows itself.

Coming along for this ride are James Gunn mainstays Michael Rooker and his own brother Sean Gunn, as well as Tony Goldwyn, John Gallagher, Jr., and (in a bit of inspired casting) John C. McGinley. *The Belko Experiment* looks to be a dark comedy with a healthy dose of gore mixed in. The story is a dash of *Lord of the Flies* mixed with *Battle Royale* and a bit of *Office Space*, but there's also a theme running through



the story about humanity and classism, something that may strike a chord with today's current society climate.

*HorrorHound* was given a chance to sit down with genre faves Michael Rooker and Sean Gunn to discuss the film and what it was like to see cubicle culture untamed.

**HorrorHound: How was this movie explained to you when James brought you the idea?**

Michael Rooker: He spoke to me about the project and not a lot of people [were] cast. I ended up reading the material and realizing I wouldn't really have time to do some of the

roles that were in there. So, I chose a role that I thought was pretty cool and something that would be a little bit different from what people would expect. And he was in agreement and everybody was happy. It was just a matter of getting me down there and timing it so that my schedule would work for everything and it wound up working beautifully.

Sean Gunn: I knew this script had been around for a while, [that] he'd written something like this and that it was sort of sitting in a drawer for a few years. I'd heard, probably the same log line that you've probably heard, it's about a bunch of people in an office building, and they are forced to kill each other lest they be killed themselves. It sounded pretty hard-core.

**HH: The film was actually shot in Colombia – how was that?**

MR: You know what, it was pleasant, and I was surprised. The people were wonderful, and because there was a little bit of an upheaval going on there over the last number of years, we were in a very beautiful location. The town was wonderful and they had a lot of great restaurants.

This is the only cast that I ever socially associated with in such a dynamic way. We went out every night and ate together. We danced and we sang. We drank ... we had just an absolutely marvelous time. Every single day I was there, we were out every night after work and going out to eat.

**HH: Michael – your character, Bud, knows the inner workings of the building. What sort of advantage does that give your character in this screwed-up scenario?**

MR: I can hide. I'm not getting involved with that mess. I'm going to hide my ass right down in the boiler room and stay out of trouble. You know where all the hiding places are. In reality, my character, before all hell breaks loose, the thrust of it was to try and find a way out. To try and find out what's going on with the energy. Where the hell did this metal barrier come from and what powers it – that kind of stuff. That was my main thrust, me, and my main partner-in-crime.

**HH: What sort of faction springs up around you, and what sort of damage can you do with the knowledge you have?**

MR: As the maintenance engineer, I see

James Gunn with Greg McLean on the set of *The Belko Experiment*.



office workers as absolutely the enemy. These people don't know how to take care of stuff. They leave crap all over the place. I have to clean up after them, take care of their messes all the time. This is my role in this movie, to start watching how they start messing each other up as opposed to my building.

**HH:** And you're thinking, "Yes, please, blow their head up and not my newly polished floor."

MR: Absolutely. Please, I just buffed the floor out last night. When I'm finished buffing, the next thing I know the door is open and mud is tracked in. If anyone had any reason to kill these people in this office building, it was Bud. He had more reason to kill all of those messy individuals.

**HH:** This film is very timely in the realm of where we are right now with society. It seems like this is going to play with the notion of class.

SG: It was certainly something as an actor, when I'm in the midst of preparing for a role and playing a role, I don't think about theme a whole lot. My job is to portray the character I'm playing, but the idea of there being a



Michael Rooker with  
David Dastmalchian

hierarchy and being a class structure was certainly pertinent to my character, because he's a cafeteria worker. He's not like the other guys, he's not a suit. So, he looks at things differently.

I think that the trauma of the event actually equalizes them. Some of the people at the top may think they are higher up that's the way they look at themselves but that's not necessarily true if someone is coming after you. It kind of puts everyone on an even playing field.

The thing that separates these characters isn't their class or where they are in the hierarchy. It's their morality, it's where

their moral compass is, and that's what makes them different from one another.

**HH:** Sean, what can you tell us about your character, Marty? Because he is the odd man out there.

SG: Marty is kind of a stoner, he's getting by. Maybe a buddy told him about this job and he thought it would be cool to live in South America for a while and, now that he's there, he's not so sure he likes it so much. He's just hanging out, and he's not panicked at all at first, but then when shit starts to get real, he really loses his mind.

**HH:** So, in terms of this movie, who are the real bad guys?

MR: There are no bad guys. It's ... um ... boy, that's a good question, and that's the best answer I could come up with. What was that book? ... *Lord of the Flies*, remember that one? God, I wouldn't want to be on an island with those kids.

**HH:** The adults don't last very long in that book.

MR: No, they don't, do they! 

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## ANOTHER WOLFCOP

by Jessica Dwyer

Three years ago, a movie (and beast) emerged from the wilds of Canada to become a new cult hit for the horror scene. This creature wasn't the sharpest tool in the shed, but his claws were. That film (and monster) was *WolfCop*, and it ripped out and stole the hearts of '80s horror fans everywhere.

The story about Lou Garou (how could he not become a werewolf?), the booze-addicted local cop in a small Canadian town, is as off the wall as the title would lead you to think. One night, Garou becomes cursed while investigating what has been called in as "cult activity in the woods." When he changes into his *WolfCop* form, he becomes the most unlikely superhero you can imagine and uses his new-found powers to stop the cult.

*WolfCop* was a love letter to the cheesy '80s horror movies most of us grew up watching, right down to the softly lit, Cinemax like "steamy" love scene featuring the title character in full-on werewolf mode. It was fun, gory, and flat-out awesome to watch. Action figures, an actual restaurant (based on the Liquor Donuts location from the film), and a rocking soundtrack were just some of the things to come from the movie. Fans were left howling for more.

With the reception of the film by horror fans, a sequel was bound to happen, and so *Another WolfCop* (a nod to the '80s sequel *Another 48 Hours*) was announced. Unabashedly giving in to the '80s love, the



movie poster meshes that along with the Stallone classic *Cobra*.

*Another WolfCop* happened because of the fans and thanks to a successful Indiegogo Campaign (with a lot of cool perks and a hilarious video). There is also some mystery still circling the film as the crew asked fans who they'd like to see appear in the movie. It won't be announced until the film premieres WHO they have popping up (and it may be more than one celebrity). I caught up with writer and direc-

tor Lowell Dean to find out all the juicy details of *Another WolfCop*.

**HorrorHound:** *WolfCop* became such a cult hit. What was the pressure like to recreate that success, but keep the feel of that throwback cult-horror vibe?

**Lowell Dean:** Believe it or not, I felt a ton of pressure when making *Another WolfCop*! It was really important to me that the sequel be a better film in every respect. It was also important to me that we continue the story rather than simply repeat the beats of the first one. Unlike the first *WolfCop*, I had to balance my personal goals with outside input and expectations from fans, so it was a new experience for me. This film still has the same tone, but I think we've pushed things to a more ridiculous level.

**HH:** Not many indie films can boast of a restaurant, comic book, etc. Can you talk about how all of that came to be?

**LD:** The expansion of *WolfCop* came about from our partnership with the Coup Company, the producers of *WolfCop*. When I finished the script for the first film, my producing partners and I entered something called the CineCoup Accelerator, a Canadian competition where filmmakers pitch their film concepts, explain why it should be chosen and suggest a plan for marketing it. CineCoup responded passionately to *WolfCop* and our marketing ideas. They then turned those ideas into a reality. And the best is yet to come!

**HH:** The *Another WolfCop* poster by Dude Designs may be the best thing ever made, especially that *Cobra* look. If you had the choice of any '80s action star to cameo in a *WolfCop* movie who would it be and what sort of creature would you want them to appear as?

**LD:** That's an awesome and ridiculous question, so I'll give you an appropriate answer. I will say Chuck Norris as a drop-kicking mummy. You can see his red beard peeking out through the bandages. He and *WolfCop* start as enemies and end as allies.

**HH:** Leo's costume and makeup were great in the first film. What improvements have you done for this go-round?



LD: We loved the general design in the first film, but we wanted to improve it and streamline the process. FX artist Emersen Ziffle honed the look of *WolfCop* for the sequel – but the changes are subtle. If you look close enough you'll notice he's more badass this time out. Pay attention to his nose and his ears. He has a great silhouette!

**HH:** What can you tell us about the plot of *Another WolfCop* and what films influenced this latest entry?

LD: This film picks up two months after the events of the first film, right around Christmas. Tina is now the chief of police. Every full moon, Lou is *WolfCop* – and loving it. An evil billionaire swoops into town and promises to clean up Woodhaven by creating jobs and a new hockey team. And then things get ... weird.

In addition to my original influences (werewolf films, *Ghostbusters*, *Hot Fuzz*), the sequel-specific influences for me were *Strange Brew*, *Slap Shot*, *Lethal Weapon*, and *Gremlins*.

**HH:** What would be your dream crossover horror film from the '80s for Lou and his crew to take on?

LD: I'd love to see Lou team up with Ash or babysit the *Monster Squad*. I'd love to see him fight Freddy or Jason. Lou would have some messed up dreams that would scare even Freddy. Other than that, truthfully I'd just love to expand the *WolfCop* universe with new monsters of our own!

**HH:** For the independent filmmakers who read *HorrorHound*, the success story of *WolfCop* is really inspirational, what advice can you give them?

LD: Just keep at it. Don't wait for permission. Make your films – and make them for you. I've been making films since I was a teenager. Sometimes, there's a modest budget. Sometimes, it's just me and two friends in a forest with fake blood. Even if you don't always love the end result, if you're smart, you'll learn a new lesson on each project and hone your craft for the next one. Be persistent!

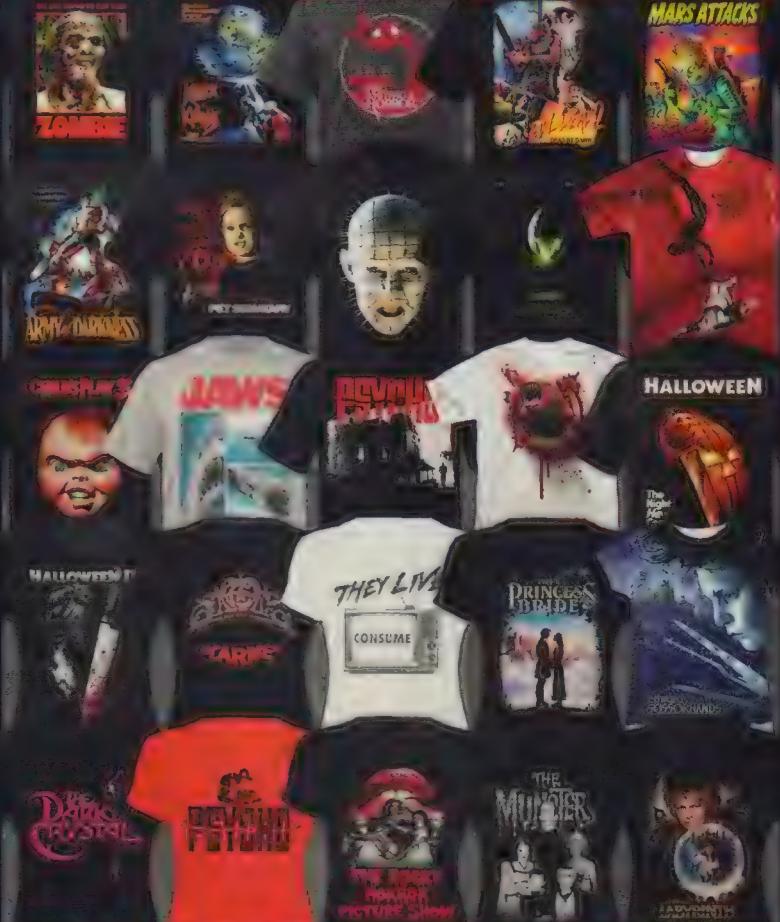
*Another WolfCop* is set to be released later in 2017; however, a proper date was not yet revealed as of press. \*



**Movie News:** IFC Midnight revealed plans to release Sean Byrne's *The Devil's Candy* to limited theatrical release this March.

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# 24X36: A MOVIE ABOUT MOVIE POSTERS

by Jay Kay

For decades, whether through painting, drawing, photography, or digital tools (often a combination thereof) ... the first image to welcome and introduce movie lovers of the wonders to come has been the movie poster. Over the years, poster art has gone through many transitions, from the original paintings of Universal auteurs like Reynold Brown to the late-century masterpieces by Drew Struzan. As the 20th century came to a close, the art of the poster had collapsed in lieu of cheaper, lackluster promotional materials that often involved "floating heads." But in recent years, with the upstart of throwback artists, talents like Roger Kastel, John Alvin, Gary Pullin, Tracie Ching, Thomas Hodge, and many others, the art of movie posters has been reinvigorated. These names have created movie illustrations on a variety of canvases that embody storytelling, texture, life, and imagination – art in which collectors and cinephiles can connect with. Thanks to this underground art phenom, film studios have even begun re-embracing the art of the movie poster, leading to a true renaissance in the medium that seems to only be in the infancy of a true return to form.

Played in 2016 at film festivals across North America including Ithaca Fantastik, Toronto's Blood in the Snow Canadian Film Festival, Fantastic Fest, and more, *24X36: A Movie About Movie Posters* tells the story of movie posters from historical, educational, personal, and business perspectives, woven with magical and emotional brilliance. Bringing together a stunning visual presentation as well as personal reflections, stories, and truth from many decades of artists, filmmaker Kevin Burke took three years to complete this documentary with the help of successful fan funding, a passionate crew, and honest producers. *24X36*

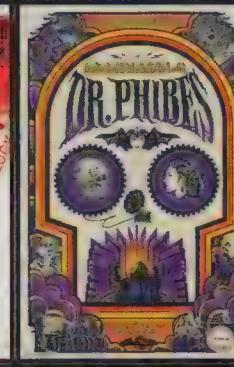
The Fantastic Artists Featured in *24X36*:



Laurent Dureux



Tracie Ching



Gary Pullin



Matt Tobin



Justin Erickson



Mat Weller

strangers in the dark, looking at something on the big screen, and experiencing that together. It's something people overtly recognize as a feeling they can't describe. There is something there.

It's something I've always wanted to do since I was a kid. To finally be able to do that with my first feature is amazing and indescribable. It does wonders for the film because it's about a part of filmmaking and the movie lover's world with movie posters, and there's something immediately that ties it to cinemas. The most important thing for me is that people are able to see it.

**HH:** Where did *24X36* come from? Names such as Roger Kastel, Joe Dante, and Andrea Alvin were interviewed ... talk about some of the essential names and artistic minds that were selected and what they brought to the narrative?

**KB:** My fiancé and producer Andrea Butler is an academic in the realm of horror films. She was doing academic lectures for a wonderful series called *The Black Museum*. Andrea was doing a lecture on the history of horror-movie posters specifically as part of that. She wanted to cover this resurgence of movie posters and screen-printed art, as we have been collecting for some time. One of our favorite artists was Gary Pullin, who lived in Toronto at that time.

So, she sought Gary out and we met. After a whole bunch of me gushing on how much I loved his work, we finally got to do the interview. We strung together a 20-minute interview clip that Andrea used in her presentation. It was a hit! People loved that video segment, and that was the catalyst for *24X36*. So, Gary Pullin was one of the artists who we would have not been able to make this film without. I say that with 100-percent confidence.

We started to explore the connections



weaves the personal into the business side of a true art form, one that continues to impact generations of fans with a constant evolution of captured moments.

Kevin Burke took some time out at the Ithaca Fantastik Film Festival to talk with *HorrorHound Magazine* before another successful film festival screening.

**HorrorHound:** Having *24X36* screened at Fantastik as well as at Fantastic Fest and in several theaters in Toronto, what have these selections done for the film?

Kevin Burke: It does a ton! I am thinking of those that are movie lovers, who experience our favorite physical media that we collect. That love of cinema started in the theater for everyone who will admit that they are a "cinephile" or big fan of film in general. A big part of that is the atmosphere. It's the experience of going to sit with a group of

with movie posters as a whole. We both had collected one-sheets when we were kids. That was very special, but I had forgotten about it. When I began collecting screen prints, the feeling came back to me. I thought it was very important to look for that connection between those worlds of illustration, celebration, and the marketing of a film. One thing we were also hoping to do was to follow more personal stories of three different artists at three different stages of their career, all revolving around working towards that big fish of a Mondo gig.

**HH: Who else was crucial to 24X36?**

KB: Paul Ainsworth, who worked on the poster, and Matt Tobin in Toronto. Both are incredible artists! Those two were instrumental. The crew in Toronto, like Jason Edmiston, who is barely human and an incredible artist! Phantom City Creative, of course, with Justin Erickson and Paige Reynolds. They're incredible artists and were key to getting *24X36* done. Without that crew in Toronto, the film would not exist.

Then, there is artist Roger Kastel, who made the original *Jaws* painting. Roger is super kind and a very humble man. So, meeting Roger and being able to speak with him about his iconic work was just a dream come true. I would imagine that any fan of film in general will be excited to see that.

As well as with the lovely Andrea Alvin. She is amazing and to speak with her about John Alvin's legacy, his work, and the impact it had on movie-poster illustration and art. John is one of those illustrators where just about everybody in the world has seen a John Alvin movie poster.

**HH: That's one of the things that I love about this documentary. The theme, that these posters are a texture to our lives, the fact that some movie posters mean the world to generations. What was it like to explore that storyline with the artists, fans, collectors, and yourself?**



Jay Kay with Kevin Burke

KB: Well, it's interesting because you talk to film fans, and there are a lot of them like us that collected movie posters when we were young. They loved movie posters that much! There are some that loved movies but didn't collect the posters; however, you would have a hard time finding someone who doesn't know what the *Jaws* poster looks like. That aspect had a huge impact on us.

**HH: I agree, it's not only impactful, but so important! It connects to the fact that not only can posters create memories, but it's almost a perfect moment for some collectors and fans. It can last forever.**

KB: There's a feeling that you get the first time that you see an incredible movie poster. However, things have changed. I can't go back and know what the fans are feeling with the new posters coming out. I am not sure whether they still experience that wonder when they see a movie poster that strikes them and sells them on this idea. They're rolling the dice because a lot of times the marketing will be better than the movie. That hasn't changed.

Those types of marketing have changed today. It's no longer the poster being the primary tool to market these films. For us who do remember, that was an important feeling. When you went to the theater and you walk down the long hall and see all [those] posters for the films that will be coming soon, that would sell you on that film. I wanted to see *Goonies*, with that chain of kids

hanging from the stalactite in the cave. So, that wonder and imagination these posters sold to us was very important.

**HH: What was it like to have Joe Dante be a part of *24X36*, since he is such a huge monster kid?**

KB: There were a couple things. For one, I absolutely love Joe Dante's work and the posters for his films. The poster for *Gremlins*, the original teaser by John Alvin where you see Gizmo's paw coming out of the box. And *The Howling* with the rip through the poster. *Piranha*, by John Sully, is incredible! So

many of Dante's works visually lend themselves to amazing posters. That's part of the reason why I wanted to get his insight. I wanted to pick his brain and find out how much say the directors had in the marketing at the time and has that changed? Which posters for his films did he love and which didn't he care for much?

**HH: Indie filmmakers like Lowell Dean (*Wolfcop*), Astron-6, Glass Eye Pix, and more will hire different artists to craft their movie posters, DVD cover art, and promotional pieces. How important is this generation of indie horror filmmakers to the illustrated movie poster resurgence, and does it circle back around to previous decades where there was less influence by mainstream studios?**

KB: Yes, they're instrumental. This revival of art and the potential for it to be revived in studio key art, I think we will start to see happen. However, indie filmmakers and studios are going out of their way to create illustrated posters and art, whether it's used to just shop at festivals and such. They are absolutely 100 percent the first step in influencing a wider movement towards this. They know what fans want!

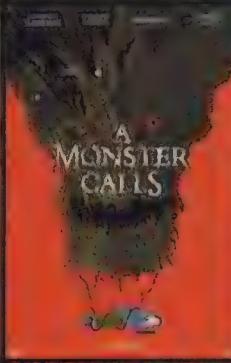
**HH: *24X36* offers the personal side as well as business side to movie posters. You spoke with different industry figures on this, including United Front Entertainment's Susan Curran, who has**



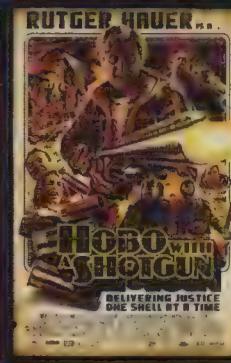
Paul Ainsworth



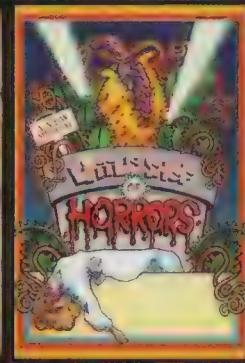
Adam McDaniel



Jason Edmiston



Sharm Murugiah



Tom Hodge

David Byrd

**Movie News:** IFC Midnight revealed that they have picked up director Alexandre O. Philippe's documentary *78/52* [which focuses on the cultural impact of the shower scene from Hitchcock's *Psycho*] for distribution later in 2017.



been so engrained in film promotion and distribution. How important was it to follow this thread on the business side, giving it the appropriate voice?

KB: To be able to speak with Susan, to hear so many of her opinions as a distributor is very much in line with a lot of the artists as well as with what a lot of the fans are saying about illustrations. Susan provided a ton of amazing insights into how that world works and again we could not have made the film originally without Susan's input on the business side.

In an early cut of the film, we hadn't interviewed Susan yet. Once our executive producers and a producer at Snowfort Pictures came on board, they helped us to refine things. They mentioned to me that we needed to get insight from someone in the know. We needed to provide this sort of information because we don't want *24X36* to be a one-sided hit piece or a fan homage. They were absolutely right. It was a pleasure to talk with Susan and others, including Chad Baker from 871 in Toronto as well.

**HH:** *24X36* took three years to create ... in those years, how much did the overall documentary evolve and change from day one?

KB: It was a long haul for *24X36* in a lot of respects simply because indie movies are very hard to make. I have a full-time job that I love. I'm fortunate in my full-time job that I work in video production. It also means that I can't take six months off and go film something. You've got to film things a piece at a time. On a documentary, if you are gonna be honest and truthful about your storytelling,

then you have to allow your interview subjects to tell that story. Then, you can extract the narrative and story out of that information they are providing you rather than telling them what to say just so you can fit it into the narrative you want to explore. I wanted it to all come through in the interview subjects and possibly some narration. Early on, there was some narration just to kind of fill in some story gaps that may have been there and, for me, needed more explanation. That ended up on the cutting room floor and not in the final cut.

Ultimately, as much as I would love to say my fingerprints are all over this, my fingerprints are only on this in the respect that I put the puzzle together from all of the insights and the other things people provided. I can't take credit for the story of this film. I'm a documentarian. I'm a fly on the wall. I ask people about their history. I ask them about their experiences. I ask them about their work. I take their words and just structure them into a linear narrative that has its peaks and valleys that people can enjoy and be entertained.

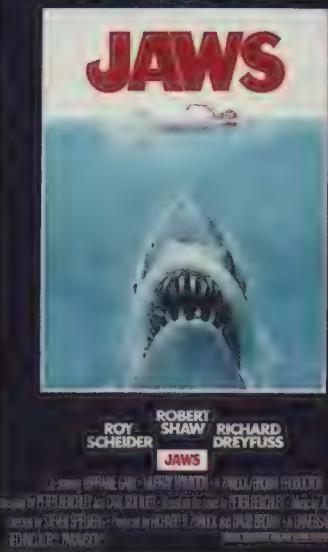
**HH:** The visual and multimedia presentations of *24X36* are two of the most crucial aspects that really bring the documentary together. Can you talk about the overall work that went into presentation?

KB: There are a lot of independent documentaries that come out each year and are fantastic. We wanted to do something that maybe would set ours apart a little bit on a visual side. We're talking about posters, we're talking about flat pieces of paper that, in terms of their meaning may carry a lot of depth, but are literally flat. We want to do something to bring those objects to life while maintaining the essence and your concentration on the art. I don't just want to put a poster up on-screen, so we decided to do some animation. We have a variety of posters come to life in the film like *Indiana Jones*. He is actually moving his arm and swinging the whip. That was very important for me to do. So, I learned Adobe After Effects so I could facilitate. Over the span of three years, I watched the movie and [now] cringe when I see the first animations I did versus three years later.

There were some I wanted to be very complex and really break down into a lot of depth and layers. So, I reached out to an incredible motion-graphic artist named Danny Ratcliff. His work is fantastic! There were some seven or eight I hired Danny to do. He ended up knocking some extremely complex animations out of the park for us.

**HH:** What poster did you feel was crucial

The terrifying motion picture from the terrifying No. 1 best seller.



as part of the visual presentation?

KB: *Jaws*, somewhat. I think that it's hard for me to look back at that now, if only because I was introduced to so many amazing stories I didn't expect as we were doing the film. Now that we filmed it, I have my favorite stories, such as John Alvin hiding his signature in his posters that I just find amazing and astonishing!

**HH:** Can you talk about Snowfort Pictures and Travis Stevens?

KB: Snowfort Pictures came along after we had worked on the film a while and really gave me the hope that this little film could go somewhere. Snowfort's library of work is unreal. To find my film amongst the films that they produced and created is just astonishing. I just can't get over it. Credit to Travis Stevens, Stephanie Trepanier, and my producer David Lawson. No one would see *24X36* without Snowfort Pictures.

I also want to thank our early executive producers Wendy Donnan and Matthew Chojnacki. Matt's book, *Alternative Movie Posters: Film Art from the Underground*, is just awesome! He was a huge supporter of our Kickstarter, and I could bounce anything off of him. Also, executive producers Jared Dobbs and Mike Gregory from Grey Matter Art have been immensely supportive. When you wear so many hats in your own production, a lot of times it's hard for you to cut certain things out or trim certain things. Snowfort, with their background and knowledge for producing great films, was instrumental in being able to guide me on this film. The film was made much better, and I can't thank them enough.



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# DOLLY DEADLY IS READY TO KILL

by Jay Kay

Film festivals continue to pop up across the country and around the world. Most genre fests are pretty broad, welcoming films from the yearly circuit plus special screenings, short films, and unique programming. The Ax Wound Film Festival is the brain child of Women in Horror movement founder Hannah Foreman. Based in Brattleboro, Vermont, the festival celebrated its second year in November. As a part of the event, Ax Wound welcomed women horror filmmakers from around the world. The lineup included short films, Q&As, workshops, and the introduction of its closing night feature: *Dolly Deadly*, by Heidi Moore.

Telling the story of a young boy named Benji (Justin Moore), *Dolly Deadly* is an offsetting and deeply disturbing story that pushes the limits of reality and the darkness of neglect. Losing his mother as a baby, Benji must live and survive with his grandmother, her boyfriend, and the bullying of the neighborhood kids while questioning his identity and place in the world. In the dirty style of John Waters, *Dolly Deadly* blends the beloved sleaze of cult cinema over the decades with a dark psychosis that utilizes a variety of storytelling triggers, including bullying, gender confusion, the choice of revenge, and family dysfunction. Moore, co-writer Cassandra Sechler, and editor Josh Funk create a surreal, dream-like visual side of fear, mood, and horror, infusing lush lighting and color. The film taps into the unsettling exposure of dolls, creative cinematography, and the exploitative treatment of Benji's character that leads to the acts of bloody revenge that builds with each word, action,



and crack in Benji's mind.

Being selected by this all-woman horror film event, Moore flew across country to present her film, a creation that featured a lot of sacrifice, hard work, and very resourceful filmmaking. Moore sat with *HorrorHound Magazine* about the screening at Ax Wound, influences, involving family, wearing many hats, and more.

**HorrorHound:** How was it playing your film as the closing feature for the second annual Ax Wound Film Festival?

**Heidi Moore:** It was such an honor for *Dolly Deadly* to play at the Ax Wound Film

Festival. It played at the end of the night so I thought everyone would take off, but we were lucky, we had a great audience. I sat in the back because it's so awkward for me to watch my movie in a crowd.

Afterwards, I got to have an insightful discussion with the crowd about the human condition and who's the real monster in horror films. It was nice to talk with all of these people who are filmmakers themselves or who are really into the genre and get deep into why people do the things they do.

**HH:** Where did the idea for *Dolly Deadly* come from? How long did it take to fully develop the final script that we see on-screen?

**HM:** I came up with the concept for *Dolly Deadly* when I was flying to the Freakshow Horror Film Festival in Orlando. On the way home, I wrote a bunch of notes, and then I got in contact with Cassandra Sechler, who I had really wanted to work with, to see if she would be interested in writing the movie with me.

At first, it was supposed to be about an actual creepy doll, but as the writing process moved forward it became about the little boy who owned the dolls instead. It was a pretty fun and wild slasher to begin with, but when it came down to it, I had to change the script to be more "budget friendly."

**HH:** The exploitation influences and style are evident from moment one. We definitely see John Waters and Troma ... can you talk about some of your influences?

**HM:** I watch a lot of TV, so, honestly, I have been influenced by everything I've seen since I was a kid. There's influence from old sitcoms, commercials, weird shit moms say ... you name it.

There is a dream at the end that was influenced by everything David Lynch, a bit of *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, and the movie *Legend*. Kind of a weird combo, but it's all floating around in my head so it has to come out somewhere. There's no way for me to stick to one style or genre when the world is full of so many inspirational things.

**HH:** You handled just about every part of the production for *Dolly Deadly*, including directing, writing, producing, design, and cinematography. What was the thought process behind managing so many aspects of the production ... then let some-



one else edit the film?

HM: Oh man ... originally, I didn't intend on doing so many things, but I guess it comes with the territory when working with such a low budget. You're kind of at the mercy of what other people are willing to contribute and sometimes it's not much. As any filmmaker working with micro budgets can tell you, that's most of the time.

I did have help from some great people, but with such a big project, even the people who had my back couldn't commit 100 percent of the time; they have to work their day jobs and make their own art, which is totally understandable. As for the editing, I was actually going to edit myself, but I was too close to the project to have any more perspective on it. I needed someone else to take it and work their magic.

#### HH: Talk about casting *Dolly Deadly*?

HM: Casting was a bit of a mess for a while, but in the end, I am so happy with who we have. A lot of it was me making my friends be in the movie ... the main character Benji is my son, so basically, he had to do it. I love watching *Dolly Deadly* because just about everyone in it is my friend and they're so cute. I love watching them and thinking about how talented they are, and I love the bits and pieces in there from all my different artist friends. They blow my mind! You reading this guys? You blow my mind!

**HH: *Dolly Deadly*, at the core of it, is about bullying and gender identity. Talk about making these themes strong pillars for the film. Are there any other themes you wanted to make sure the audience picked up through the production?**

HM: *Dolly Deadly* is definitely about bullying and gender roles in society, and that is very clear as you watch the movie, but one thing I really wanted to focus on is how people treat each other and how they expect others to act. People treat each other like garbage and expect everything to be fine. It's like they think there are no consequences for their actions, and they don't realize how damaging their actions can be to others. I'm sure none of us realize that we can traumatize other people, and that things we say could eat away at someone's soul. What if something you carelessly did to someone stewed in their mind for days, months, or years until they snapped and did something bad? It seems ridiculous, but not everyone is tough enough to let things roll off their back.

**HH: How personal is this film for you?**



Director Heidi Moore

HM: *Dolly Deadly* is so personal to me, and I don't think any other movie I make in the future could ever be as close to my heart. First off, both of my kids are in it; Justin who plays Benji and Lars plays Kenny. This movie is something I will have forever to go back and see them all cute and little. I am so proud of them!

On a personal level, this movie has so much of me in it. So many little details, thoughts, etc. that I threw in there. I worked so hard on this damn thing ... for three years, I handed over my paychecks and soul, built props, promoted, filmed, and more. It will forever be the special one.

**HH: Can you talk about the relationship dynamic between Grandma (Kimberly Wes-Carroll), Benji (Justin Moore), and Donald (Jay Sosnicki)?**

HM: I know plenty of people who see their kids as a burden because they'd rather be out doing their own thing. There are so many cases of women killing their kids because they want to be with their boyfriend, leaving their kid in a trunk so they can go out partying, etc. Not everyone has maternal instincts.

Even though Grandma Mitzi is a miserable person in the movie, I wanted to show her side a bit, where she would like to just have her own life, but she is stuck with people she doesn't want around. Donald is her little boy toy, but, really, he's useless. I think Mitzi keeps him around because she doesn't want to be alone.

I think Benji cares about both of them and tries to be loved and accepted, but there is just no getting through to them; they're dealing with their own demons. This is something I always try to remember. Just

because someone is a caretaker/parent, that doesn't mean they're perfect, and it doesn't mean they don't have their own shit to deal with.

**HH: Talk about the stop-motion animation around the puppets and dolls that seem to develop more as Benji's psychosis grows darker.**

HM: The stop motion plays into Benji creating his own little happy place. It's like the dolls are alive in his world, talking to him and being his number one fan. At first, we only had a little bit of the stop motion in the script, but as we started seeing what our animator Josh Funk was creating, we wanted to utilize it more. It adds so much to Benji's fantasy land, and we're fortunate to have had access to what we did.

**HH: Talk about the idea of revenge through bullying and the closing credit scenes, with the interviews of witnesses and experts talking about Benji?**

HM: We've all wanted revenge at some point. I personally don't move forward with my evil thoughts, but I think that there are times when people should. Why not? People get to dish it out all the time, so their victims should have a chance to get their whacks in. Countless times I've wished I could just do or say anything I wanted to when people were being terrible, so the next best thing is to write about it. That way we can all live vicariously through someone who just ain't gonna take it anymore! At the end, with all the newscasts and shows talking about what happened, I wanted to show how everyone likes to hype up tragic events. It's like they get off on it! 🔥

# ATOMICA: An Interview with Dagen Merrill

by Jason Rignita

Syfy has been producing original films since 2001, and though infamous for the cable channel's ultra B-movie titles, there are occasional moments of brilliance. *Atomica* is the most recent of those moments [not to say that B-movies features cannot be brilliant, but that's a discussion for another day]. Syfy took a departure from the gratuitous violence, CGI, and epic battles to focus on a story that is much more about human experience (solitude, trust, paranoia, conflict, etc.) than adventure. Think about the quiet, sullen, bleak moments that build suspense and question sanity in films like *Alien*, *Blade Runner*, and *Event Horizon*, then sprinkle in the futuristic corporate conspiracy of films like *Total Recall* and *RoboCop*, and what you have is *Atomica*.

After the meltdown of a nuclear power plant, a global energy giant called Auxilison builds the largest radiation containment facility in history directly atop the fallout site. With their development of the "tri-fission engine," Auxilison is able to create usable energy from the site while stabilizing the radiation. The facility is largely self-running, requiring only two personnel to operate – a nuclear scientist and a maintenance specialist. Located in the middle of a radioactive wasteland, the facility is many, many miles from the nearest settlement. The operators of the facility are screened through a series of rigorous psychological assessments to ensure the ability to maintain focus in deep seclusion. When communications go offline, corporate sends in a safety engineer to investigate and bring the facility back online. What she finds is more a mystery of sanity than engineering. The longer she stays, going further down the rabbit hole and not knowing who to trust, she eventually questions her own rationality.

Dominic Monaghan in *Atomica*.



The minimal cast sets the scene for bleak seclusion, but it's the performance of the actors that sells it. *Atomica* stars Sarah Habel (*Whip It*) as the safety inspector, Tom Sizemore (*Natural Born Killers*) as the facility scientist, and Dominic Monaghan (*Lost*) as the maintenance engineer. *Atomica* was shot in an old abandoned Titan-2 missile silo, the largest of its kind ever built. Filming six stories underground in a complex that surrounds a 130-foot deep missile silo adds not only believability, but also emphasizes the solitude and deprivation. Knowing that a facility built for nuclear destruction was being used in this story about nuclear contamination is fantastically ominous.

*Atomica* is directed by Dagen Merrill. Though Merrill's filmography is sparse, it represents a broad base of style and

genre. One thing he is known for is exploring methods of creating and then capturing experience, the experience of characters with one another in given situations and characters with the situation itself.

*HorrorHound* caught up with Dagen and had a chance to chat with him about the making of *Atomica*.

**HorrorHound:** Your directorial filmography crosses a lot of genres; how did you get involved with *Atomica*?

Dagen Merrill: I got involved early on. We had this idea, through our producers, to do a sci-fi on a very low budget. So, we found a script that had won a couple of awards. We optioned the right to use it ... and then, went out and made it.

**HH:** Your previous films indicate that you enjoy exploring the experience between characters as well as characters and a situation. I've read where you were experimental in how you engaged characters with each other in *Murder in the Dark*. Was there any of that in *Atomica*?

DM: *Murder in the Dark* was non-scripted entirely; in that, it was an experimental film. The actors didn't know what the movie was about. They didn't even know the genre when they got into it. So, it was totally different. *Atomica* was scripted. I guess the similarity would be, in both cases, we introduced actors into an environment that was more or less 70 to 80 percent authentic. So, in the case of *Murder in the Dark* we took them to an abandoned village in Italy where they had, basically, a run of the place in making [decisions] in character. In *Atomica*, we shot in an underground missile silo in Washington State. It kind of was what it is supposed to be in the film. The actors were able to be in the space. They're not on stages. They are 70-feet underground all day long. So, there's a sense of that.

**HH:** Speaking of ... *Atomica* is a perfect example of how a location can become another character in a film. Were there aspects of the original script that were changed to better fit the location?

DM: Oh yeah. For one thing, the original script was modern day. It didn't take place in the future. When we were able to find a location that felt like ... this containment

center wouldn't be having these problems right now, but in like 100 years, pushing off the problems of our present. It felt better to set it in the future.

**HH:** It was well cast. Tom and Sarah, they were on point, and they were awesome, but it was Dominic that really knocked it out of the park. He completely sold the character. Was that your vision for Robinson?

DM: I feel you are most effective as a director when you are in complete collaboration with your actors. I feel we clicked from early on, from our first meeting. We sat down over coffee and talked about the character. He brought so much into whom the character was but also the ultimate performance, even in the physicality. You look at it now and it's amazing. He really did a great job. He took some real risks – taking a role of this size and making some of the choices he made for the character, with his movement, the look of his character, his haircut. He took some big risks given how small this film is. You can chalk all of that up to how courageous a performer, an actor, and a person he is.

**HH:** You had great visual/digital effects; however, they were used sparingly. Was this budget or story driven?

DM: That was totally story driven. Before we knew what the budget would be, we had the screenplay. It's a character story. It's about what's happening beneath the surface of reality but also beneath the surface of each character. We knew, making sci-fi, there would be special effects to deal with, but we didn't want it to take center stage. We wanted to point to what was most important, which is what is going on with the characters.

**HH:** *Atomica* was so story driven. Everything truly hangs on the relationship of Sarah and Dominic's characters. I know in independent filmmaking there is

Tom Sizemore and Sarah Habel.



usually very little time – you've got to get in, shoot, get out, and edit. Did you have any chances to get Sarah and Dominic together to feel out one another in this world or in the silo to feel it out?

DM: Because we didn't have a lot of time and because of my experience, I actually did the opposite. I let Dominic get comfortable with the location. We spent some time down there and felt really good about it. I did not let Sarah spend much time in the location or with Dominic until later. We shot more or less sequentially. So, hopefully that uncomfortableness and that unknowingness come through as the story unfolds. There are some places where that succeeded and other places where ... well ... more rehearsal time? It's like you said, in indie filmmaking you don't always have that luxury. It was a hard place to shoot. We were underground for 12 hours a day. It was really cold, even outside. It was a lot to ask of them, and they really did a great job.

**HH:** You just made a contemporary sci-fi film with little action but an abundance of story, which seems to be antithetical to pretty much all other sci-fi today. How do you think sci-fi fans are going to receive *Atomica*?

DM: I don't know. Some of my favorite sci-fi has been more personal. If you go back to *Aliens* for example, we know there's move-

ment, a lot of scares, and a lot of special effects, but, for me, the feeling I got watching Bishop having a conversation, that stuff is what sticks with you. The context of sci-fi puts the viewer into this heightened state of awareness where anything could happen, which enables them, hopefully, to enjoy more of the drama than actually is happening. That's my experience. That's what I love about sci-fi.

**HH:** This is a Syfy film. What is the roll-out schedule looking like?

DM: They are actually doing a small theatrical release in March, then VOD a few days later. After that, I believe it will be going to the Syfy channel this summer. I was thrilled. When you make a small film, there's no guarantee you're going to find an audience. It was truly an independent film. For me, knowing that Syfy and Universal are going to support it ... it's great. Take a chance, give it a small theatrical release, and get it out there. I was thrilled.

**HH:** We've seen all the big SFX and the big epic battle scenes. People are ready for something they can sink their teeth into. You have definitely brought that. We are looking forward to it. Any chance of seeing more horror from you?

DM: Of course! Actually, I am just finishing a war-horror film. What I love about the genre, much like sci-fi, it allows us cinematically to get closer to the real human experience. It heightens things. It allows us to really feel. But, yes ... I see myself doing more horror and sci-fi. I'm glad you enjoyed it. You are the first person I have spoken to outside of the group since we started the publicity push on *Atomica*. From [one] person to another, thanks a lot.

*Atomica* will be available in select theaters March 17, and available on VOD and digital HD beginning March 21.





### Who's Watching Oliver

Stories presented from a single point of view have the inherent ability to allow a unique relationship to develop between the viewer and the main character. Films like *One Hour Photo* and *Her* pull you into a person's personal experiences and thoughts. When the story is dark (*Maniac*), the experience can be like being held captive and forced to view horrific scenes one after the other. However, there is often a bit of cinematic Stockholm Syndrome as the viewer begins to care for the lead, even in the midst of repugnant acts of cruelty. Director Richie Moore's *Who's Watching Oliver* is the best example of this phenomenon that I have seen in indie horror.

Oliver is a nihilistic loner living in Thailand. His days are mundane and dull. Dressed in drab "old man's clothes," he wanders the streets in search of companionship. In his awkward way, he often finds the attention of young women, but his mother, who he regularly face-chats with on his computer, is never pleased with these women. Oliver then spends his evenings killing them in horrible, grotesque ways. That is until he meets Sophia, a woman who accepts Oliver and begins to love him. Can salvation come in the form of pure, naïve love? Or have too many years of bloodlust ruined Oliver's chances?

*Who's Watching Oliver* is haunting, morbid, and beautiful. It is equally revolting and compelling. You will fall in love with Oliver. You will understand his pain and compulsions. Then, you will ask yourself, "What does that say about me?"



by Jason Hignite



### The BIG F

Brian Papandrea of Rock Bottom Video can do just about anything by now. Over the years, he's made a name for himself in films like *Chubbies* and *Fangboner*, always establishing a strong on-screen charisma. His ability to find your funny bone has become one of his many growing talents as an actor. This time around he's still acting, but he's also in the director's chair of his debut feature film, *The BIG F*.

*The BIG F* doesn't really play by the rules when it comes to Sasquatch films. First off, they actually show you Bigfoot quite often, and it's almost intended for you to make fun of him. He doesn't look the best, nor was he gifted in girth [pun], but, hey, give him a break. He's single and lonely on Valentine's Day (and he happens to have specific tastes), and ends up wreaking havoc on the same cul-de-sac as our lead characters, Chuck (Brian Kilby) and Maverick (Brian Papandrea). These two must pair together to get rid of the beast once and for all!

*The BIG F* feels like *The 'Burbs* hijacked by Frank Henenlotter. It's full of dark humor but comes across with heart. Bigfoot movies, more often than not, keep us waiting in anticipation to see what will happen. In *The BIG F*, the creature is a substantial part of the plot, but it's not taken as seriously as the fate of our characters and the comedic value of the entire situation. Arguably more comedy than

horror, *The BIG F* still leaves behind a pretty giant foot print.



by Brantley Yates



### Demon Hunter

From Ireland comes this fast-paced action-horror thriller! *Demon Hunter* is the story of young Taryn Barker (Niamh Hogan) as she journeys from guilt-ridden teenager to ass-kicking heroine. Teenage angst and irresponsibility prompt Taryn to send her sister home alone after school – a selfish act inadvertently leading to Annabelle's violent death.

A cryptic message from a stranger offers to introduce Taryn to Falstaff, an ancient being that promises to name her sister's killer. All is not as it seems and her revenge will come at a heavy cost – her soul. Falstaff tells Taryn she can get her revenge if she becomes his pupil – an offer she readily accepts. Taryn's quest for revenge leads her to cross paths with a Detective Beckett, who needs Taryn's help as he gets a first-hand glimpse that things really do go bump in the night.

Told using flashbacks, the film chronicles the events from past to present and allow the viewer to enjoy the ride as timid Taryn turns into Taryn Barker, Demon Hunter. *Demon Hunter* has some genuinely good fight scenes, special effects, and beautiful shots of the city. Shot entirely in Ireland, director Zoe Kavanagh really makes a bold statement with her first film. The city's stone work and narrow cobble streets enhance the night shots. The film is also supported by a strong goth-metal and industrial

soundtrack, which is every bit as good as the film.



by Audrey Lane



### Attack of the Lederhosen Zombies

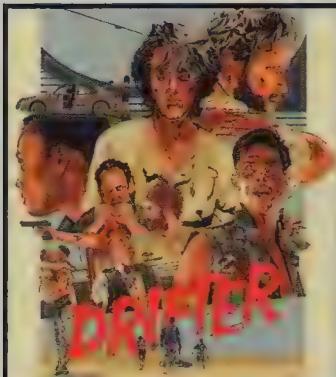
This is a ... difficult film to review. From Austrian filmmaker Dominik Hartl comes this zombie comedy set in the snowy landscape of the Alps. The story centers on a trio of extreme snowboarders who end up stranded in a remote ski resort after a publicity stunt goes awry. Thanks to the shenanigans of the local resort owner who has used experimental toxins to power his snow-making machine, animals and humans alike become infected with a zombie virus that turns the region's snow-covered peaks blood red.

The central issue with this film is that while it has a solid story (basic, but still solid) with reasonable acting, the filmmakers lacked an integral ingredient in producing a quality film: comedic timing. Nearly every joke falls flat throughout the film's entire 78-minute runtime, and that's not to say that the jokes aren't funny. On paper, they are. Whether it was in the filming or editing, there is just a major hiccup in the overall product by none of the well-written jokes landing [most of which revolve around snowboard decapitations and slow-dancing dead hordes]. To be fair, though, the budget soundtrack is also sadly distracting.

Why should you see the film? If you're a GoreHound, this one is easy. It's gory as all get out! The film excels at coming up with clever kills and creating spectacular splattering of demented grue. If released in

the early 1990s, this would have become a cult classic, based on the FX alone.

by Nathan Hanneman



### Drifter

Gritty and desolate. Frantic but somehow tedious. Ostensibly original yet oddly familiar. Chris von Hoffmann's *Drifter* lives up to its name as it drifts through 86 minutes, using sound and music to build up for action that just never fully delivers. In the film, a pair of outlaw brothers are held captive in a desolate town run by a small family of psychotic cannibalistic lunatics and their sadistic Mayor ... the plot wanders away as the characters stagger through a milieu of (benefit of the doubt) homage and (I suspect) derivative nonsense drawn from a plethora of horror and action films, both recent and classic.

While the acting was not stellar, neither was it the worst example of the thespian's craft I have ever witnessed. I can't fault the actors (such as stars Aria Emory, Drew Harwood, and Monique Rosario) for not keeping to the story when an actual story never really emerged. The setting was never clearly established; the bulk of the film takes place in a collection of trailers that is either a post-apocalyptic remnant of society or one of those dusty little towns in the middle of nowhere that is on the verge of being a ghost town.

The biggest critique I have is that sound-wise, there was simply too much. There were far, far too many musical stings and abrupt "scary" sound effects that had no corresponding payoff in the plot or the visuals. *Drifter* may have succeeded as a short film rather than a feature – and with a touch

of humor added to ease the tension from the overwrought sound and music.

by Michelle Conty



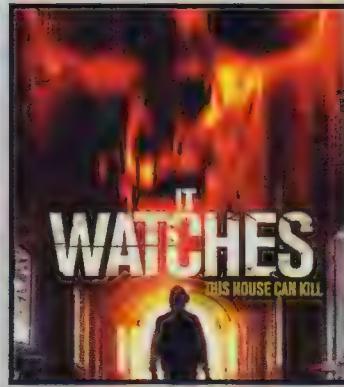
### Blood Brothers

Featuring a supporting cast of horror icons that includes Lynn Lowry, Sean Whalen, Barbara Crampton, and Ken Foree, *Blood Brothers* is a slick noir tale that blends the visual appeal of Sam Mendes with the body horror of David Cronenberg, all wrapped in a David Lynch-soaked love letter to horror fans. A twisted, fun, and stylish ride surrounding a pair of brothers named Charles and Thomas, the film starts when their disturbing game of fantasy-meets-murder becomes all too real and changes the relationship dynamic between the brothers, their wicked mother (Crampton), and the world around them with one fell smash. One brother embraces the impulse, divinity, and murderous rage while the other is consumed by regret and fear for what has happened. While the brothers embrace their path, a personable, psychic detective (Foree) is on the hunt for them to halt their insidious need for blood.

Filmmaker Jose Prendes captures the monstrosity, mood, and insanity within the visual structure, color palette, and storytelling of *Blood Brothers*. Creating chaos and raw emotion from the first moment of the film, you see Prendes cultivate characters with depth, charisma, connection, and personality. *Blood Brothers* lives on overdramatic highs and presents its share of blood for the gore seeker. With a blend of comical and melodic violence, Prendes and Denman create some truly memorable scenes and kills that

complete this sick but caring portrait of family, fantasy, and madness.

by Jay Kay



### It Watches

Is it Andre's mind – or is the world crumbling around him? This question surrounds the latest project from filmmaker Dave Parker (*Tales of Halloween*) and actor/co-writer Ivan Djurovic. Andre (Djurovic) has been in an accident. He is left by a friend to recover for the weekend at an unoccupied house. As the hours go by, Andre uses his hand-held camera to make a video. Having dinner with his girlfriend, both start to notice that things don't seem to be right around the grounds and inside of the house. They see and hear shadows, figures, strange lights, and sounds inside the walls and on the grounds, coinciding with the arrival of a strange visitor (played by James Duvall). Understandably, all of this puts Andre on edge. With each moment that goes by the mystery grows, with Andre not only fighting to survive but discovering more clues to his locked-away memories. As if that weren't enough, he gets closer and closer to finding out the terrible truth inside the creepy residence. Is Andre going crazy or are there really forces at work that watch and stalk him? Does "It" watch?

*It Watches* is a real head trip from Parker, whose previous work never seemed this confusing or chaotic. The story is a bit of a challenge upon first viewing but seems to come more together with each subsequent viewing. Parker and Djurovic build the human monster right in front of us with misdirection, framing, simple haunting tactics, and a location that, through shadow and atmosphere, is terrifying and makes you miss what is right in front of you. *It Watches* keeps you off-balance and unsettled, just like the characters unsure of what the hell is going on until it's too late.

by Jay Kay



### Unearthed & Untold:

#### The Path to Pet Sematary

I have three words to say to you: *Pet Sematary* documentary. Okay ... three more: Go watch it!

Maybe a little more information will help. In *Unearthed & Untold*, directors John Campopiano and Justin White seek to tell the story of one of the darkest Stephen King films to ever grace American cinema. They nail it. The film opens with the story of one woman's quest to convince a series of producers and studios that *Pet Sematary* is a film worth making. From there, the genesis of the book itself is discussed, and viewers are given the story behind the book that even Stephen King was reluctant to have published.

Once the documentary gets underway, it doesn't let up. The filmmakers tracked down nearly everyone involved with the film – from the brilliant director Mary Lambert, to cast, crew, landscape artists, the guy who drove the tanker truck – there's even an interview with the woman whose critter burial ground inspired Stephen King's original story. The documentary production is clean and tight, the interviews are well structured and full of interesting information, and the pacing and cinematography are as solid as the rest. The music chosen worked perfectly to guide the emotion of the audience – I found myself holding my breath in suspense a couple of times – for a freaking documentary!

Overall, *U&U* is a triumph of the horror documentarian's art. An in-depth, comprehensive look at

director Mary Lambert's cinematic phenomenon that needs to be seen.



by Michelle Conty

**TV News:** Sadly, it looks like a CW-hosted *Constantine* pickup will never happen. But it was revealed that Matt Ryan will return to voice the character for a limited animated series set to air on CW Seed sometime in 2018.



by Jay Kay



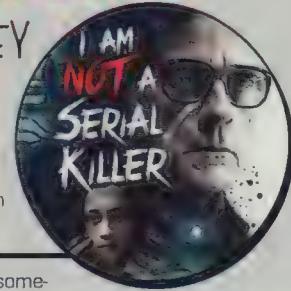
by Jay Kay



# QUESTIONS WITH BILLY O'BRIEN

BY JON KITLEY

Here at *HorrorHound*, we occasionally like to throw crazy questions at directors within the horror community – unusual, off-the-wall, and often dumb questions – in a little article series we call 10 Random Questions. In the past 10 years of this column's lifespan, we have cornered such directors as Dario Argento, Tom Savini, and James Gunn to ask these seemingly innocent, yet often idiotic queries. This issue's victim? We had a chance to bother a director who has been making a splash on the scene with his recent horror films *I Am Not a Serial Killer*, *The Hybrid*, and *Isolation*. We present 10 Random Questions with Billy O'Brien.



**HorrorHound:** Did you study serial killers for the film? If so, which serial killer do you find the most fascinating and why?

**Billy O'Brien:** No ... Chris [Hyde], my co-writer, and I started on serial killers in Wikipedia when we began adapting the book [*I Am Not a Serial Killer*], but in a couple of hours had darked ourselves out! Very grim. Dan Wells is big into serial killers, so we went with what he'd written. Otherwise the film would have lost any humor and got too grim.

**HH:** How fun is it filming in the winter time?

**BO'B:** Coming from damp and grey UK/Ireland, the snow and sun was a delight. The cold – it's not so bad once you dress properly. The light was gorgeous.

**HH:** Did any snowball fights break out during the filming of *I Am Not a Serial Killer*?

**BO'B:** Yes. Robbie, Nick, and I [all Irish] went for it several times.

**HH:** Do you prefer to live in a hot climate or cold?

**BO'B:** As I get older, it's more about the light I think. So, I love Ireland in the summer because it's not too hot and only gets dark around 11:00 PM at night ... think I need to get rich and have houses dotted all over the world, primarily to get away

from the cold damp grey days we get here in winter. The ones you have to have the lights on all day, and it's pitch black by 3:00 PM. I like heat but not humidity. Maybe a shack in a remote part of Spain. Nice and dry and lovely swimming. Great food there, too. Need to make films that don't have a cult label, I guess.

**HH:** Which is your favorite brand of breakfast cereal?

**BO'B:** Porridge.

**HH:** Who delivered the most chilling performance as a serial killer and in which film?

**BO'B:** Oh God ... I really haven't seen that many. So boring ... but Anthony Hopkins when I saw him in the cinema in *Silence of the Lambs* had such power. Favorite was a brilliant Belgium serial killer fake doc called *Man Bites Dog!* That was amazing.

**HH:** *American Werewolf in London* or *The Howling*. Which side are you on?

**BO'B:** Never seen *The Howling*, so *American Werewolf* ... for now.

**HH:** What was the first horror film you ever watched?

**BO'B:** Either Carpenter's *The Fog* or [see who can name this one] a black-and-white one with a scene seared into my young brain – kind of a rich 19th-

century house and somebody sitting in a chair in the dark when a woman [I think] comes in and cuts off their hand with a swipe of their axe. Scared the shit out of me. We only had one channel [Irish TV in the '70s] and a black-and-white TV, so, er... the film might be in color actually, now that I think on it. I've never seen it again and can remember nothing else about it. Oh, and I scared myself silly late one night when *The Omega Man* came on, and I was on my own, no idea what was happening, but it certainly wasn't like Irish TV!

**HH:** Do you prefer digital or 35mm?

**BO'B:** 16mm and 35mm all day long. *I Am Not a Serial Killer* is 16mm, *Isolation* 35mm. Only film I ever shot on digital was *Scintilla*, and wish it had been film.

**HH:** Do you think physical media, like DVDs and Blu-rays, will go the way of 8-tracks and cassettes?

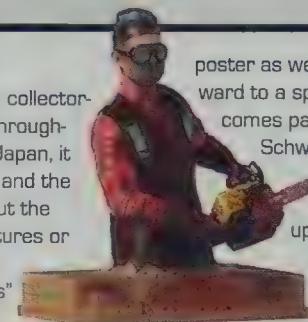
**BO'B:** Fuck, I hope not, but everything else is ... just got Netflix, and already my patience for watching a film is gone! If it doesn't start fast, I find my patience going and an evil little voice going, "Ah, sure let's click back to Browse and find something else." This is terrible! Means my slow-burn films have no chance.

## SPECIAL EDITION EXPLOSION

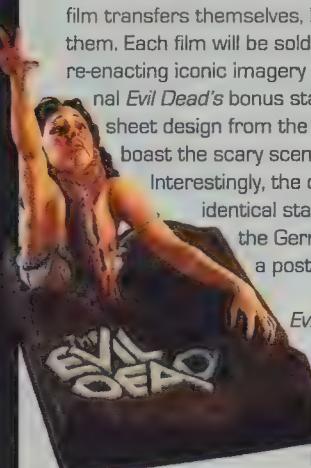
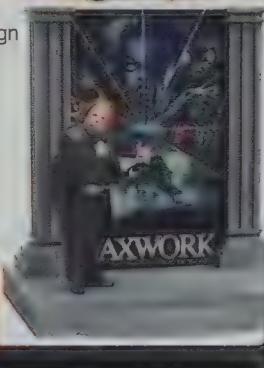
For reasons that may never be explained, a slew of special collector-edition horror Blu-rays have been announced for release throughout Germany and Japan over the next several months. In Japan, it was announced that both the 1981 original *The Evil Dead* and the 2013 *Evil Dead* remake will receive new disc treatment, but the newsworthy aspect of these sets are not in the bonus features or film transfers themselves, but what comes packaged with them. Each film will be sold with three-dimensional "statues" re-enacting iconic imagery pulled from each flick. The original *Evil Dead*'s bonus statue will recreate the famous original one-sheet design from the film's poster, while the remake sculpture will boast the scary scene of Mia peeking from the locked cellar.

Interestingly, the original film set will also be issued with a near-identical statue in Germany (although the logo will feature the German verbiage of *Tanz Der Teufel* and includes a poster and a T-shirt).

For German horror fans, the *Evil Dead* set isn't the only exciting new special-edition Blu-ray on tap for release. A *Hostel* set will come paired with a mini-bust of the iconic "kill suit" from the Eli Roth splatterfest (and will include a

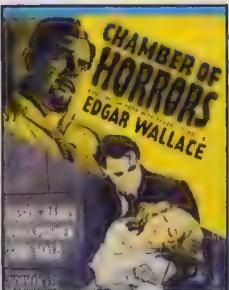


poster as well). Classic horror fans can also look forward to a special edition of Fulci's *The Beyond*, which comes packed with a statue of the chained Schweick (with the German-language title: *Die Geisterstadt der Zombies*). Our last two releases are quite interesting ... first up is a collector-edition of *Xtro*. This off-the-wall sci-fi/horror hybrid will be released as a "Platinum Cult Edition," paired with three BDs, a vinyl record, a T-shirt, film cell, and a statue of the movie's weird creature. Lastly, we have a sick little *Waxwork* statue that will come paired with both films that make up this series. You can keep an eye open for these sets on various foreign retail markets, such as Amazon or DiabolikDVD.com, as they are released throughout this spring.

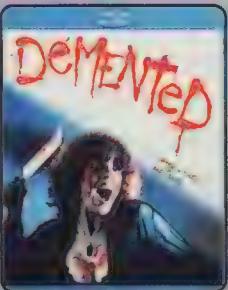




**Caltiki the Immortal Monster**  
Available: April 11th  
Studio: Arrow Video  
**About:** A team of archaeologists descend on an ancient Mayan city to investigate mysterious disappearances.



**Chamber of Horrors**  
Available: March 21st  
Studio: Kino Lorber  
**Includes:** *Aka The Door with Seven Locks*, includes a new HD master, film historian commentary, and trailers.



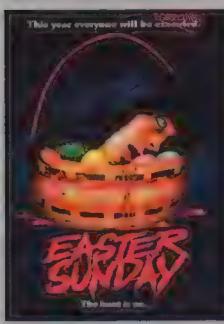
**Demented**  
Available: April 11th  
Studio: Shout! Factory  
**About:** A woman is raped and must deal with the nightmares and ghastly visions of her former tormentors.



**Donnie Darko**  
Available: April 18th  
Studio: Arrow Video  
**Includes:** A 4K restoration of both theatrical and director cuts, various audio commentaries, interviews, and more



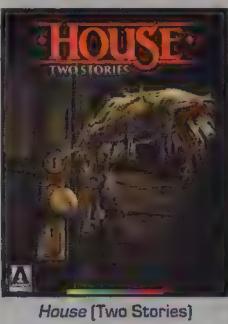
**Drive-In Massacre**  
Available: March 14th  
Studio: Severin Films  
**Includes:** This 1977 slasher includes a director commentary, interviews with the director and star, and more.



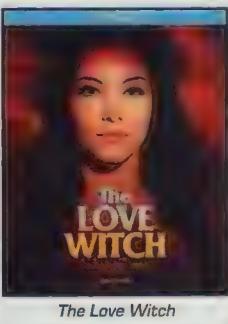
**Easter Sunday**  
Available: March 14th  
Studio: Video Music, Inc.  
**About:** The late Robert Z'Dar stars in this spoofy Easter holiday indie slasher film.



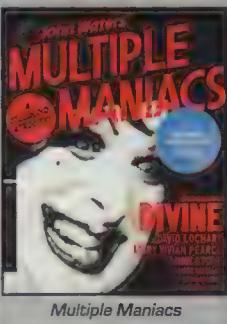
**The Gate**  
Available: Now Available  
Studio: Lionsgate Films  
**Includes:** Two audio commentaries, numerous featurettes, isolated score selections, and more



**House (Two Stories)**  
Available: March 21st  
Studio: Arrow Video  
**Includes:** New 2K restorations of both *House* and *House II*, commentaries, documentaries, and much more.



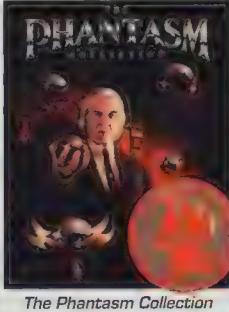
**The Love Witch**  
Available: March 14th  
Studio: Oscilloscope Pictures  
**About:** A witch uses spells and magic to get men to fall in love with her, in a tribute to 1960s pulp novels



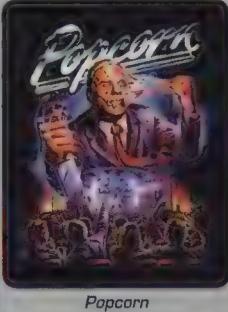
**Multiple Maniacs**  
Available: March 21st  
Studio: Criterion  
**Includes:** New 4K digital restoration, John Waters audio commentary, and new interviews with cast/crew.



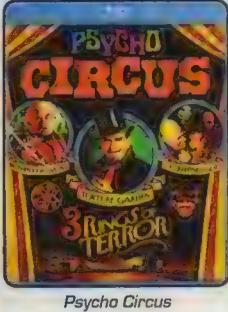
**MST3K: XXXVIII**  
Available: March 28th  
Studio: Shout! Factory  
**Includes:** *Invasion USA*, *Track of the Moon Beast*, *Colossus of the Headhunters*, etc.



**The Phantasm Collection**  
Available: March 28th  
Studio: Well Go USA  
**Includes:** All five films in the *Phantasm* franchise, each loaded with commentaries, interviews, and much more.



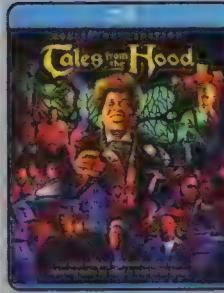
**Popcorn**  
Available: March 7th  
Studio: Synapse Films  
**Includes:** Limited steelbook boasts 2K transfer of film, director and star commentary, and a making-of feature.



**Psycho Circus**  
Available: April 4th  
Studio: Mill Creek  
**Includes:** Three classic horrors, such as *The Creeping Flesh*, *Brotherhood of Satan*, and *Torture Garden*



**Pulse (1988)**  
Available: March 7th  
Studio: Mill Creek  
**About:** A "pulse" of electricity moves from house to house, wreaking havoc on the homeowners in this '80s gem.



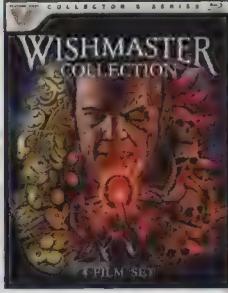
**Tales from the Hood**  
Available: April 18th  
Studio: Shout! Factory  
**About:** An urban anthology where a local mortician shares various tales of horrors with would-be thieves.



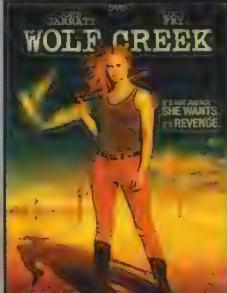
**The Vampire**  
Available: April 11th  
Studio: Shout! Factory  
**About:** A doctor finds himself changing into a bloodthirsty monster after accidentally taking experimental pills.



**Virus**  
Available: May 2nd  
Studio: Shout! Factory  
**Includes:** The 1999 documentary *Virus: Ghost in the Machine*, as well as additional TBA extra materials.



**Wishmaster Collection**  
Available: March 28th  
Studio: Lionsgate Films  
**Includes:** All four films in the *Wishmaster* series with featurettes, and audio commentaries for each film



**Wolf Creek: Season 1**  
Available: March 21st  
Studio: Lionsgate Films  
**About:** John Jarratt returns as the villainous Mick, as he is on the hunt for fresh prey.

DVD & Blu-ray  
Release Schedule  
A week-by-week rundown of notable DVD and BD titles.

**March 7, 2017**  
*The Eyes of My Mother* (BD)  
*Popcorn* (BD)  
*Pulse* (BD)

**March 14, 2017**  
*Apocalypse Kiss* (DVD/BD)  
*Ascent to Hell* (BD)  
*Drive-In Massacre* (DVD/BD)  
*Easter Sunday* (DVD)  
*Elle* (BD)  
*Firestarter* (BD)  
*The Love Witch* (DVD/BD)  
*The Man Who Could Cheat Death* (DVD/BD)  
*Mondo Weirdo*/  
*Vampiros Sexos* (BD)  
*Skull* (DVD/BD)  
*Z-Nation: S3* (DVD)

**March 21, 2017**  
*Chamber of Horrors* (DVD/BD)  
*Evolution* (BD)  
*Game of Death* (DVD/BD)  
*House (Two Stories)* (BD)  
*Invisible Ghost* (BD)  
*Multiple Maniacs* (DVD/BD)  
*Teen Witch* (BD)  
*Wolf Creek: S1* (DVD)

**March 28, 2017**  
*Death Walks at Midnight* (DVD/BD)  
*Death Walks on High Heels* (DVD/BD)  
*MST3K: XXXVIII* (DVD)  
*Mortuary Massacre* (DVD)  
*Phantasm Collection* (BD)  
*What's the Matter with Helen?* (BD)  
*Wishmaster Collection* (BD)

**April 4, 2017**  
*Invasion of the Bee Girls* (BD)  
*Psycho Circus* (BD)  
*Tank 432* (DVD/BD)

**April 11, 2017**  
*Caltiki the Immortal Monster* (DVD+BD)  
*Demented* (BD)  
*Lurking Fear* (BD)  
*The Mephisto Waltz* (BD)  
*The Vampire* (BD)

**April 18, 2017**  
*Contamination .7* (BD)  
*Donnie Darko* (DVD+BD)  
*Making Contact* (BD)  
*The Night Evelyn Came Out of the Grave* (BD)  
*The Red Queen Kills Seven Times* (DVD/BD)  
*Star Crystal* (BD)  
*Tales from the Hood* (BD)

**April 25, 2017**  
*I Bury the Living* (BD)  
*The Screaming Skull* (BD)  
*Wolf Guy* (DVD+BD)

**May 2, 2017**  
*Beyond the Gates* (BD)  
*Virus* (BD)

\* DVD or Blu-ray formats are indicated in parentheses  
\*\* Release dates subject to change



WELCOME TO A NEW INSTALLMENT OF TOY NEWS ... A PLACE WHERE EVERYONE KNOWS EVERYONE AND NOTH-  
ING IS WHAT IT SEEMS. EXCEPT THAT WE SEEM TO NOW LIVE  
IN A WORLD WHERE *TWIN PEAKS* TOYS ARE A THING. IT'S  
ALMOST SPINE-TINGLING, REALLY. OTHERWISE, ALL OF OUR  
FRIGHTFUL FAVES ARE PRESENT AND ACCOUNTED FOR,  
INCLUDING FREDDY, JASON, PINHEAD, AND CHUCKY!

#### More Pops Than You Can Shake a Stick at:

Once again, Funko has given us plenty to talk about, as this issue boasts not one, but two lines of figures featuring characters from *Twin Peaks*. A series of 4"-scale articulated figures will be released in conjunction with a full wave of Pops! created from the same David Lynch-produced universe. If that wasn't enough, *Mystery Science Theater 3000* Pops! were FINALLY announced (although only of the 'bots Crow and Tom Servo). A comic-store exclusive *Blade: Vampire Hunter* Pop! was revealed, along with a trio of Pops! centered on the MTV television series *Teen Wolf*. Lastly, in Dorbz-form, look for a pair of figures to see release based on the cult-classic film *Donnie Darko*.



Shown at Right: For collectors who prefer things on the cute side, Funko also showed off a new series of Playmobil figures, which will include two *Ghostbusters* - as well as a new wave of *The Walking Dead* Mystery Minis titled "In Memoriam," which solely features deceased characters.



**Hell on Earth:** Mezco Toyz have unveiled two super-fun, new stylized rotocast figures of Sam (*Trick 'r Treat*) and Pinhead (*Hellraiser III*). Each comes with accessories, such as Sam's bag of treats and Pinhead's Lament Configuration, and retail for approx. \$29.99.



**Pop Goes Freddy:** Mezco Toys unveiled a number of new products just as this issue of *HorrorHound* was going to press. The coolest being a series of "Burst a Box" jack-in-a-box style toys featuring iconic characters like Pinhead, Chucky, Freddy, Jason, and Sam (*Trick 'r Treat*).



#### Shin Godzilla:

NECA unveiled a few fun G-Man products which are about to make their way to retail shelves. A Shin Godzilla figure will be available, stretching 12" total [from head to tail]. You can pick up this gnarly sucker sometime in June for approximately \$22.99. If

Shin is too untraditional for you, just hitting stores is a 1954 version of Godzilla which carries a smaller retail price of \$19.99.

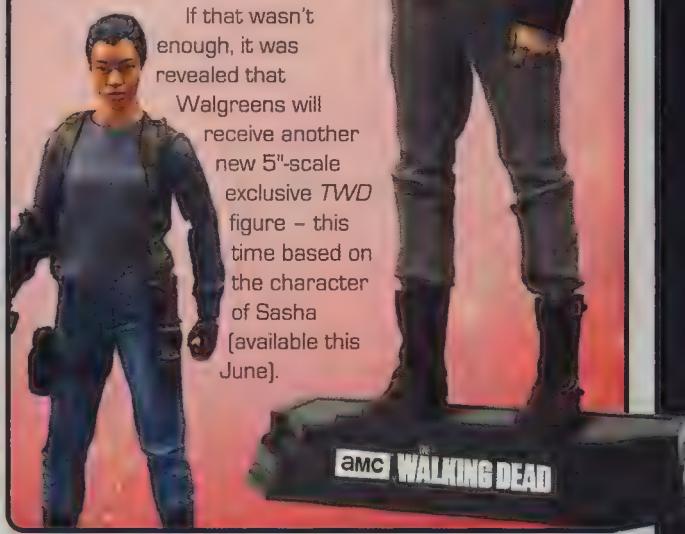


#### Living Dawn of the Dead Dolls:

A number of fun new Living Dead Dolls are coming soon from Mezco Toyz, including this pair of zombies straight from the Romero classic *Dawn of the Dead*. "Flyboy" and "Plaid Shirt" hit stores this June and retail for \$45.99 each. Also look for a Deadite Ash (*Evil Dead 2*).

#### McFarlane Slugs One Out:

McFarlane Toys seems to have slowed their *Walking Dead* product releases as of late, but at least one cool piece of *TWD* plastic will soon be heading to toy shelves. The "big bad" Negan [and Lucille] was announced as part of the Color Tops line and is expected to hit stores this September, with a retail price of \$17.99.

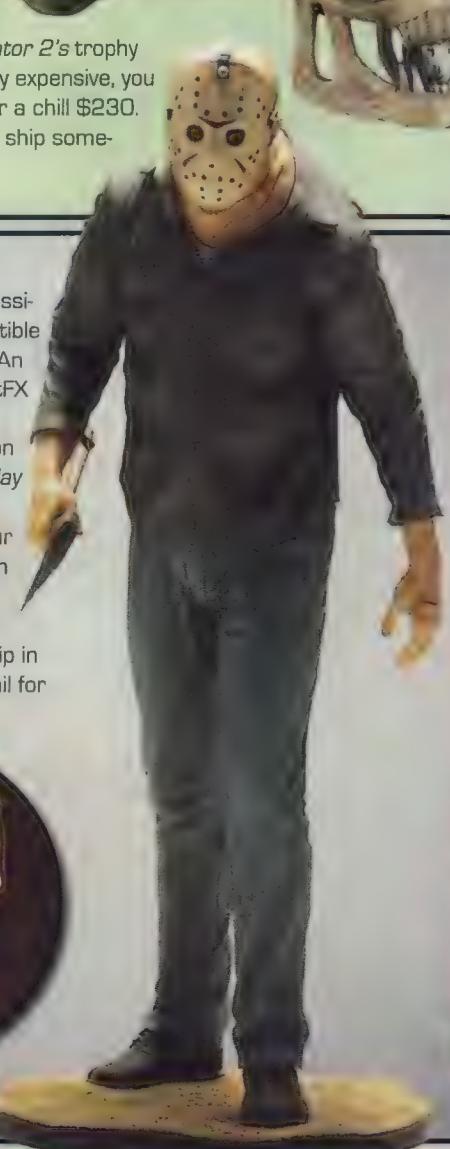


**Life-size ... Skull:**

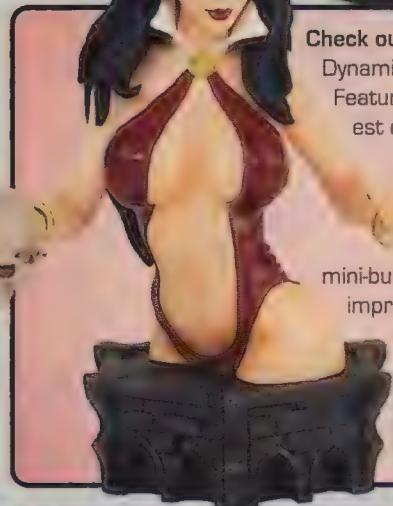
NECA is continuing their trend of bad-ass prop replicas [i.e., *Alien Egg*, *1:1 Slimer*, etc.] with their latest – an Alien Xenomorph Skull Foam Replica [right out of *Predator 2*'s trophy case]. Really cool, yet really expensive, you can secure yours today for a chill \$230. This replica is expected to ship sometime in April.

**Koto-Voorhees:**

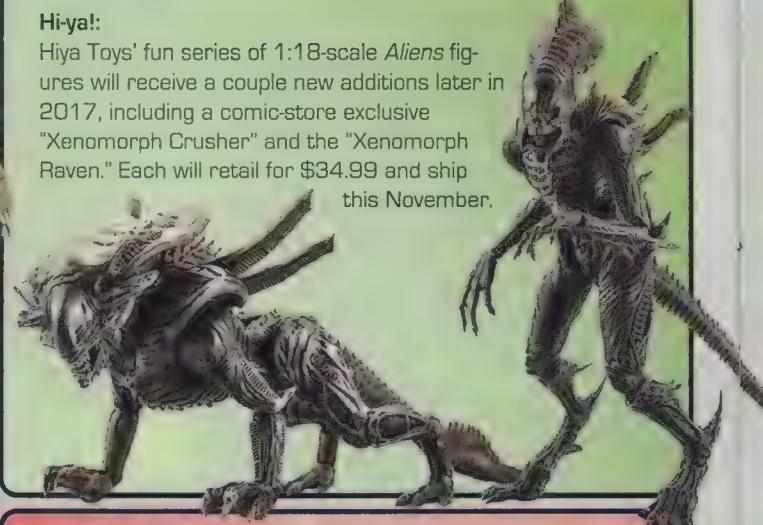
Kotobukiya announced possibly the most "killer" collectible in their catalog's history. An 11"-tall super-detailed ArtFX statue of iconic slasher Jason Voorhees! Based on his appearance from *Friday the 13th Part III*, this masked maniac holds your choice of a machete or an axe. This exceptionally detailed Voorhees ArtFX Statue is scheduled to ship in July of 2017 and will retail for approximately \$119.99.

**Check out this Bust:**

Dynamite Entertainment is at it again. Featuring the iconic Vampirella, their latest collectible is quite the striking figure, sculpted off of the art stylings of comic legend Arthur Adams. As a part of their "Women of Dynamite" mini-bust collection, this piece stands an impressive 7.5" tall, is presented in poly-resin, and will be released in an undisclosed limited-edition production number. This piece ships in March with a retail price of \$89.99.

**Hi-ya!**

Hiya Toys' fun series of 1:18-scale *Aliens* figures will receive a couple new additions later in 2017, including a comic-store exclusive "Xenomorph Crusher" and the "Xenomorph Raven." Each will retail for \$34.99 and ship this November.

**Eaglemoss:**

The latest reveals from Eaglemoss' collector series figurines includes products from *Aliens* and *The Walking Dead*. From *Aliens*, we have a new Xenomorph Warrior as well as the character of Hudson. Each are expected to ship this June and retail for \$29.95 each. As for *The Walking Dead*, the next figures are set to include Dale and Aaron [not shown]. Retail on these two knuckleheads are \$19.95 each. Expect them in stores this June/July.

**Cinemachines:**

Similar to the *Aliens* vehicles released last year, NECA announced a new wave of "Cinemachines," which feature replicas of the hunter/tank and aerial machines showcased in the film *Terminator 2*. Each measure approx. 5-6" and will retail for \$24.99, shipping this April.

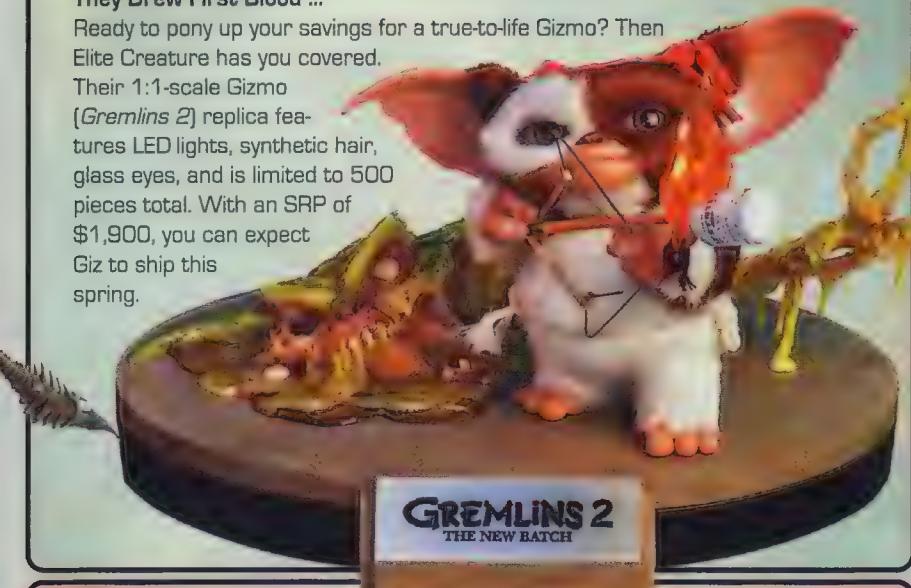


**Toy News:** Quantum Mechanix's line of Q-Pals plush dolls have a trio of *Supernatural* characters to warm up to, including Sam, Dean, and Castiel. You can order yours at [qmxonline.com](http://qmxonline.com).

**They Drew First Blood ...**

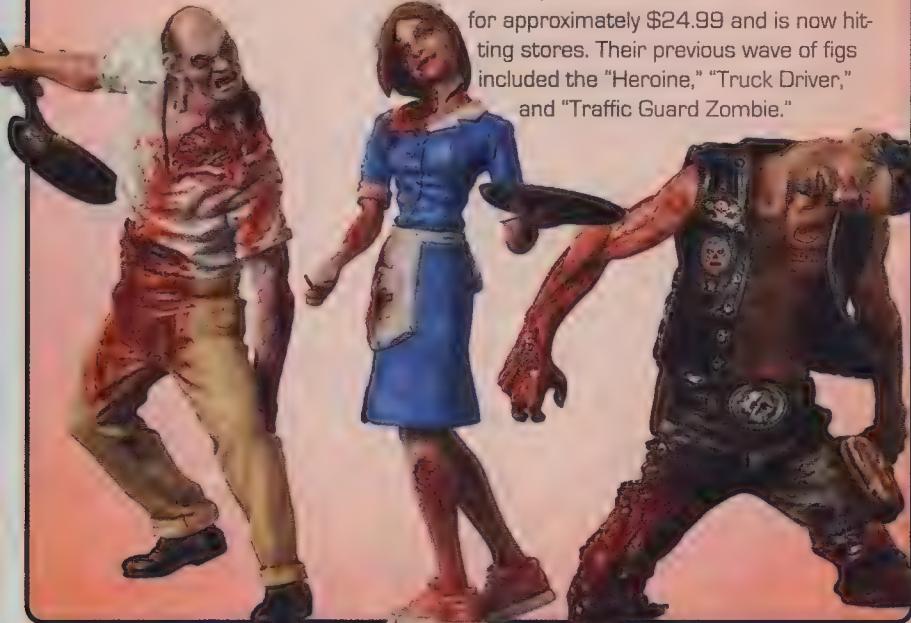
Ready to pony up your savings for a true-to-life Gizmo? Then Elite Creature has you covered.

Their 1:1-scale Gizmo (*Gremlins 2*) replica features LED lights, synthetic hair, glass eyes, and is limited to 500 pieces total. With an SRP of \$1,900, you can expect Giz to ship this spring.

**Tales from the Apocalypse:**

Gecco Corp. has a new trio of plastic model kits for those of us that enjoy a good gore toy. From their *Tales of the Apocalypse* kit line, we have "The Cook," "The Waitress," and "The Biker."

Each kit retails for approximately \$24.99 and is now hitting stores. Their previous wave of figs included the "Heroine," "Truck Driver," and "Traffic Guard Zombie."

**Sadako vs. Kayako:**

The Japanese horror icon-meets-icon feature *Sadako vs. Kayako* is now available to screen in the US thanks to Shudder, but even cooler is this series of blind-box "cup hangers" featuring the title characters as well as young Toshio (gold variants of Toshio are also available). Right now, you'll have to hunt these down via import toy sellers.



Trick or Treat Studios also announced a new line of plastic vacuform Halloween masks due in stores this fall based on characters from *Goosebumps*, *Saw*, and *Halloween*.

**Trick or Treat in 2017:**

The popular Halloween company Trick or Treat Studios unveiled their 2017 catalog with a number of exciting new products, the most noteworthy being masks based on *Creepshow* (Nate Zombie and Fluffy), *Full Moon's Killjoy Goes to Hell* and *Castle Freak*, a series of *Goosebumps* masks, and new *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and *Child's Play* products. Look for these masks in stores this fall.



**ReAction Returns:**

Super7 announced a new wave of ReAction 3.75" action figures based on Mike Mignola's *Hellboy* comic. Hellboy, Liz Sherman, Abe Sapien, and Lobster Johnson each retail for \$15 and are now shipping.

**Continued Keyrings:**

Monogram is going to continue their lines of horror and *Gremlins*-based blind-bag keyrings with a second assortment that includes new characters like Regan (*Exorcist*), the Female Gremlin, George, and Bat Gremlin.

**Life-sized Nightmare:**

Elite Creature Collectibles may just have the most bad-ass Freddy Krueger collectible of all time, a 1:1-scale life-sized bust featuring the maniac's look from *A Nightmare on Elm Street 3: Dream Warriors*. The price for this masterpiece? \$1,600.

**Skull Island Collectibles:**

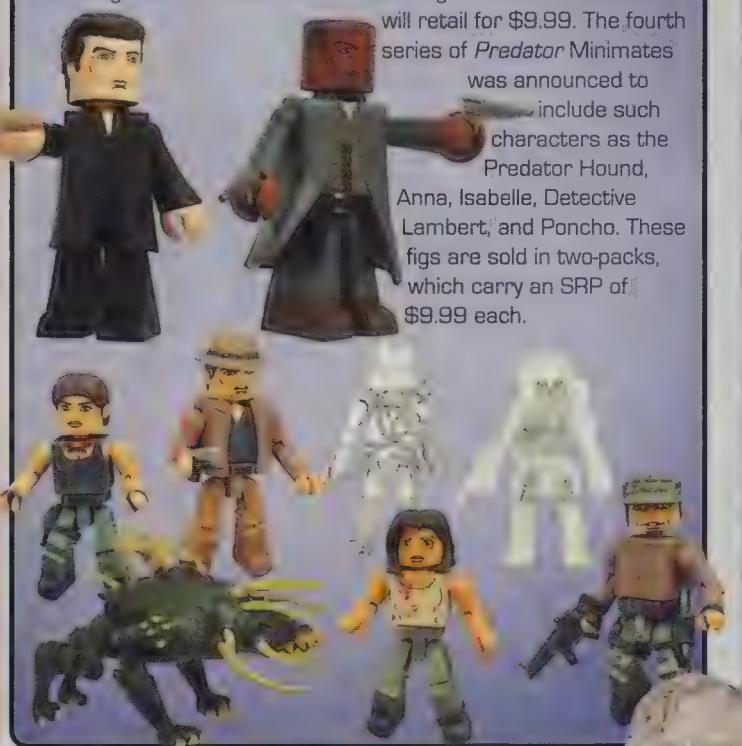
In an odd twist, it's not a major toy company that secured the *Kong: Skull Island* figure license but rather Lanard Toys

– a cheapo manufacturer that has unleashed a large volume of Kong collectibles ranging from an 18" ape to vehicles [like helicopters, boats, and jeeps] that come paired with both soldiers and dinosaur accessories. There are plenty of figure sets to choose from, all of which are now available at mass retail outlets near you.

**Vini-Minis:**

Diamond Select Toys have a few new noteworthy 'mates worth talking about. First up is a Viniimates 2-pack based on the upcoming Stephen King film *The Dark Tower*. This set includes the

Gunslinger and the Man in Black. Each figure stands 4" tall and will retail for \$9.99. The fourth series of *Predator* Minimates was announced to include such characters as the Predator Hound, Anna, Isabelle, Detective Lambert, and Poncho. These figs are sold in two-packs, which carry an SRP of \$9.99 each.



American Mythology announced a fun [and unexpected] new comic based on Adam Green's *Hatchet* film series. This blood-soaked #0 issue [which includes five variant covers, three of which are shown below] hits stores March 29th, with a brand-new story from writer James Kuhoric and art by Greg LaRocque.



Titan announced that their sell-out comic book based on the Showtime TV series *Penny Dreadful* is making a return this April. A new ongoing series will continue the story directly after the shocking series' finale, with the first four-issue story arc titled "The Awakening." The series will feature writing by Chris King, with art by Jesus Hervas, and will boast no less than six variant covers, including two connecting photo covers, for fans of the now-defunct TV series.

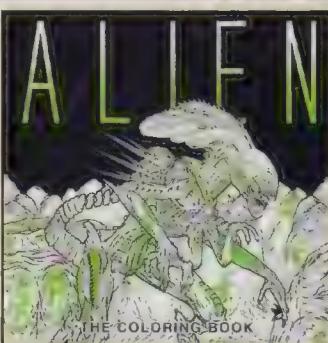


Dynamite revealed a return to the cult TV show, *Charmed*, with a new ongoing comic series boasting the writing talents of Erica Schultz and art by Maria Sanapo. The Halliwell sisters return with a litany of variant covers, the first issue of which hits stores this March 8th.

The hit Syfy show *Z Nation* makes its way to comics thanks to Dynamite. This series serves as a prequel to the TV show and boasts various alternative covers, including a photo cover [not shown]. Written by Craig Engler, with art by Fred Van Lente, look for this title in stores on April 12th.

## BOOK NEWS

Notable books this issue: A pair of Alien-based products includes a fun coloring book from Titan Comics, which carries an SRP of \$14.95 and streets May 9th, and *The Art and Making of Alien: Covenant* [also Titan], a 192-page massive ode to the upcoming Ridley Scott feature, which will be available May 23rd, with an SRP of \$39.95. *Cinégeek* is a new encyclopedia of nerdom film facts and tidbits that will likely be of interest to HorrorHounds. This 96-page hardcover [by Pluttark] hits stores on June 28th.



**Comic News:** Legendary Comics announced that they would be issuing a special *Kong: Skull Island* comic series that will delve into the story of the upcoming blockbuster film from Legendary Studios.

## COMIC BOOK NEWS

A noteworthy new comic release to keep an eye open for in March/April is *Aliens: Dead Orbit* – a new four-issue mini-series from James Stokoe [writer and artist], which hits stores April 26th. Also look out for a duo of *Ghostbusters* comics, including an original-meets-reboot mini titled "101" [March 22], and *Deviations* [March 16th], a "what if" one-shot that asks what would the world have been like if the 'Busters were never formed? A similar *Deviations* title is also available for *X-Files* [March 19], which questions what the world have been like if Mulder [and not his sister] was abducted by aliens? *Hellboy and the B.P.R.D.: Ghost Moon* is a Hong Kong-based two-issue mini from Mike Mignola hitting stores March 8th [with art by Brian Churilla]. Lastly, *Prometheus: Life and Death* is a one-shot sequel to the 2012 film [April 26th].





# Mystery Science Theater 3000

a HorrorHound Retrospective

by Nathan Hanneman



From 1988 through 1999, *Mystery Science Theater 3000* had grown from local "horror host" experiment to full-on cult sensation. When the series had come to an end, it wasn't due to a lacking of fan interest or support, but instead the mounting difficulties in obtaining cheap film rights for television and cable network usage, and a network that determined it was time to move onto new projects and ventures. Despite its end, *MST3K* has never truly gone away.

known as KTMA, had been bought and "relaunched" as a syndication-based channel which was having moderate success airing vintage show reruns. The station began working towards creating in-house show productions to help give the network its own voice and fill up the channel's airing blocks. As part of this initiative, production manager Jim Mallon struck a deal with local comedian Joel Hodgson to create a "horror host" style series that utilized the channel's pre-existing contracts for low-budget creature features, sci-fi romps, and out-of-date shows and serials. *Mystery Science Theater 3000*

home. A pilot for the series was initially filmed (regarded as episode "KOO") with the 1968 sci-fi "classic" *The Green Slime*, but never aired (the film was later featured in the series' proper, in episode "108"). Later KTMA episodes included films from the *Gamera* franchise, *Phase IV*, *City on Fire*, *Fugitive Alien*, and *Humanoid Woman*. By the spring of 1989, 21 episodes of *MST3K* had aired. While the show was a success, the network was struggling to keep afloat, and eventually



Since the series' finale, *MST3K* has maintained its fan base thanks to a continued releases in both VHS and DVD formats from companies such as Rhino Home Video and Shout! Factory. That's also not to mention off-shoot projects from the series' various stars, including online, live, and home-video productions like *The Film Crew*, *RiffTrax*, and *Cinematic Titanic*. This spring, the series will once again return to television with all-new episodes (and cast) thanks to an insanely popular Kickstarter campaign, in which fans (or MSTies; if you will) breathed new life into the franchise. So, what is this odd low-budget TV sensation, and how exactly did it become as popular as it has? That answer begins in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in late 1988.

In the late '80s, a Minneapolis local television network,

was the outcome, a show which would not only screen catalog titles otherwise deemed unwatchable, but Joel would host and literally sit in on the film screenings with the audience at home. As the films played, he would "riff" on the on-screen shenanigans, poking fun at the budget, costumes, acting, and other easy targets. *MST3K* debuted in November 1988 and became an instant local sensation.

On KTMA, *MST3K* launched with the 1981 "feature" *Invaders from the Deep* (a film compiled of episodes from Gerry Anderson's 1960s British TV series *Stingray*). *MST3K*'s production was as low budget as the films it riffed (with sets, props, and robots built out of found parts and thrift-store buys, and the use of Joel's magic background to help create on-screen "science"), but the quirkiness and humor hit

filed bankruptcy that summer. Soon after, Joel Hodgson and Jim Mallon sold *MST3K* to a fledgling cable network known as Comedy Channel, where it premiered its newly polished format in November of 1989 (Comedy Channel changed its name in 1991 to the now more familiar Comedy Central).

## The Story

The original idea behind the series involved two mad scientists, Dr. Clayton Forrester (played by Trace Beaulieu) and Dr. Laurence Erhardt (J. Elvis Weinstein) who captured and launched their janitor, Joel Robinson (Hodgson), into space, and are forcing him to watch "horrible" B movies. How many bad movies does it take to drive a person insane? This was the question at hand, as they forced Joel weekly doses of insanity. Our host, however,



**Did You Know?** The bone-shaped Satellite of Love (where Joel/Mike are "stranded") was named after the popular song of the same name by Lou Reed.



er, combats the effects of lonesome torture by creating robotic friends to help him kill time and make light of (or "riff" on) the films they are so brutally forced to view. The focus of Dr. Forrester's study

somewhat involves world domination, in some absurd manner. Most fans of the show won't remember Dr. Erhardt, as he left the show after 35 episodes and was replaced by new Dr. Forrester, stooge, "TV's Frank" (played by Frank Conniff).

Trapped aboard the "Satellite of Love" (the name of his orbiting prison), Joel pieces out segments of the ship to make (as mentioned) a number of wise-crackin' friends. His robots consisted of Tom Servo (originally voiced by J. Elvis Weinstein, then replaced with Kevin Murphy during the show's first season on Comedy Channel), Crow T. Robot (voiced by Trace Beaulieu, but later replaced with Bill Corbett in season eight) as well as seldom-seen Gypsy (Weinstein, then Jim Mallon, and later by Patrick Brantseg).

Each episode revolved around feature-length movies in which the three hosts (Joel, Tom Servo, and Crow) would deliver commentary throughout with funny musings about the plot (or lack thereof), dialogue, and budget. A number of science-fiction, horror, action, and exploitation films were chosen by the evil Dr. Forrester – as well as short films and vintage serials (used in many cases to help bulk up episodes' runtimes). Some of the many great films screened during the series included *Godzilla vs. Megalon*, *Hercules Unchained*, *The Amazing Colossal Man*, *The Giant Gila Monster*, *Pod People*, *It Conquered the World*, *King Dinosaur*, *Earth vs. the Spider*, *Santa Claus Conquers the Martians*, *Bride of the Monster*, and many others.

Halfway through the show's fifth season, Mike Nelson (a writer, who had been on the show for some time playing bit characters in bumper-segments) replaced Joel as the host of the series. Joel had personal issues with the show and decided to move on, leaving his creation in the hands of those who helped turn it into the cult sensation it had become. An episode writing Joel off the show ran, featuring his character escaping the Satellite of

Love, thus forcing Dr. Forrester to find a replacement test sub-

ject: The host switch seemed to go over well, although there are definitely fans of the series who prefer one host over the other (it helped the transition knowing that Mike also served as the show's lead writer). Unfortunately, Comedy Central decided to drop the title from its lineup, which allowed the Sci-Fi Channel to pick up the ball for the series' seventh season. The pick-up came hot off the heels of a massive letter-writing campaign to save the series (the first time MSTies stepped into save the show).

Boy, did the show have a fan base. Since its inception, the series has maintained a strong fan club status, issuing merchandise in any and all shapes (from hats and shirts to shorts and soundtracks). One of the most popular merchandised items came in 1999, thanks to toy company Moore Creations, Inc. who unleashed what are easily the most sought-after licensed *MST3K* products – limited-edition cold-cast porcelain

mini-busts of Crow T. Robot and Tom Servo. Both figures stand at 2.25" in height and were sold in a black box together (original price: \$50).

During the 1990s, members of the *MST3K*

Information Club received regular newsletters that would often include advertisements of the various "small" items that were being produced by Best Brains Inc. at the time. Many of these smalls have become highly collectible today – the coolest of the cool included a wristwatch, a lunch box, lapel pins (of Tom, Crow, Gypsy, the *MST3K* logo, and the Satellite of Love), a set of character magnets, rubber stamps, and – one of the most memorable of all items available – a car shade boasting the iconic character silhouettes. Big-time collectors of all things *MST3K* will want each of these items, for sure! And with so many MSTies, it's hard to be a completest when it comes to collecting these vintage items.

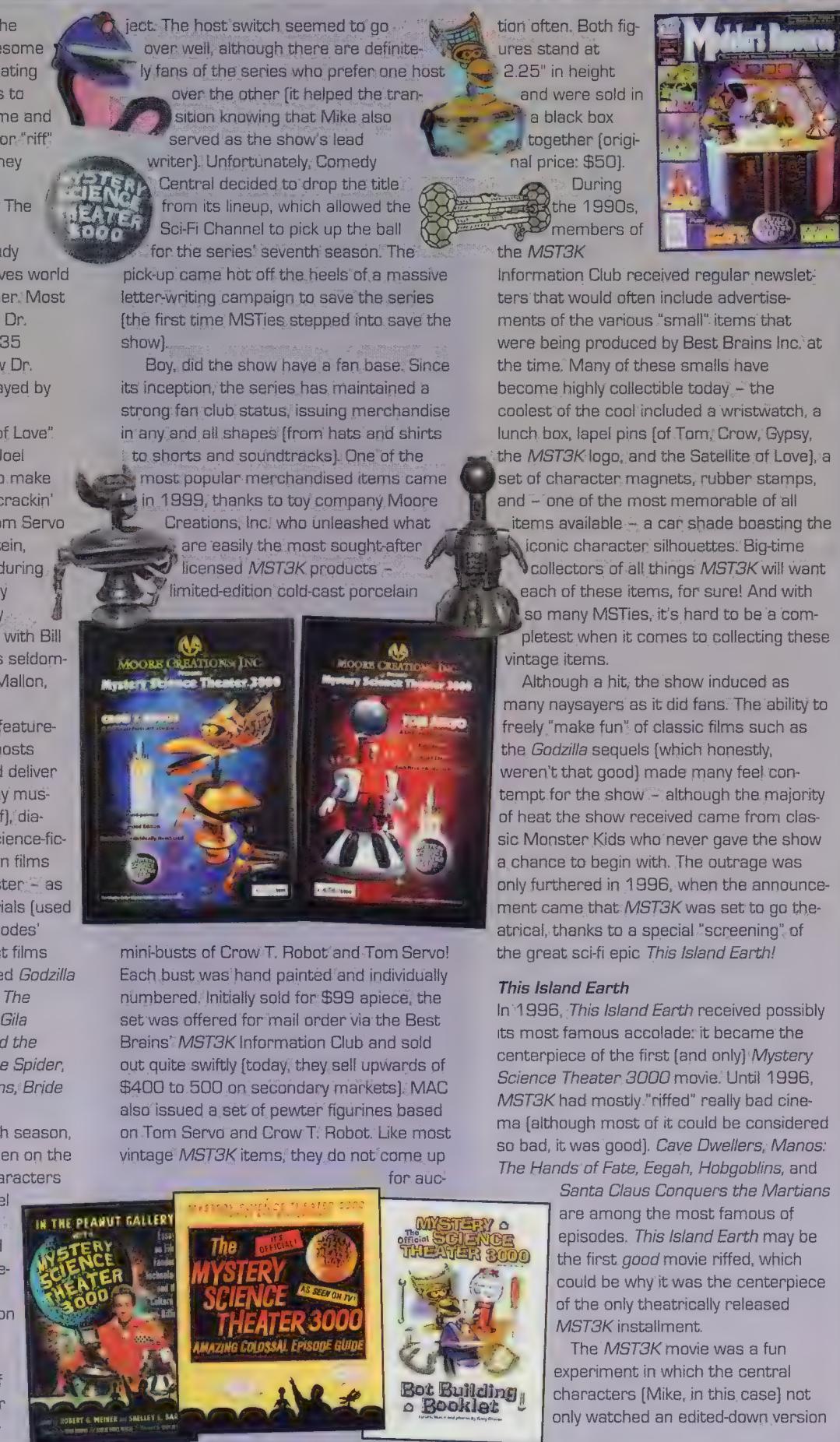
Although a hit, the show induced as many naysayers as it did fans. The ability to freely "make fun" of classic films such as the *Godzilla* sequels (which honestly, weren't that good) made many feel contempt for the show – although the majority of heat the show received came from classic Monster Kids who never gave the show a chance to begin with. The outrage was only furthered in 1996, when the announcement came that *MST3K* was set to go theatrical, thanks to a special "screening" of the great sci-fi epic *This Island Earth*!

#### *This Island Earth*

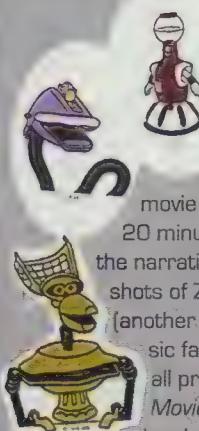
In 1996, *This Island Earth* received possibly its most famous accolade: it became the centerpiece of the first (and only) *Mystery Science Theater 3000* movie. Until 1996, *MST3K* had mostly "riffed" really bad cinema (although most of it could be considered so bad, it was good). *Cave Dwellers*, *Manos: The Hands of Fate*, *Eegah*, *Hobgoblins*, and

*Santa Claus Conquers the Martians* are among the most famous of episodes. *This Island Earth* may be the first good movie riffed, which could be why it was the centerpiece of the only theatrically released *MST3K* installment.

The *MST3K* movie was a fun experiment in which the central characters (Mike, in this case) not only watched an edited-down version



**Did You Know?** Last year, Frank Conniff released his own book, *Twenty Five Mystery Science Theater 3000 Films That Changed My Life in No Way Whatsoever* – available on amazon.com for \$12.95.



of *This Island Earth*, but they participated in bumper sequences that featured the Interocitor prop and other aspects of the film. The movie itself saw approximately 20 minutes of the story cut from the narrative, including various FX shots of Zagon attacking Metaluna [another example of hard-core classic fans being upset at the overall project]. While *MST3K: The Movie* wasn't a big success, it has become a cult classic and is among fan-favorite installments of the series' run.

Unfortunately, classic Monster Kids – true fans of the 1955 feature – did not take kindly to the riffing, as many felt that their beloved movie was being made fun of. This kick-started some of the worst criticisms of *MST3K*. [Though, the most valid arguments were against the film's poorly edited runtime.] The interesting irony was that the *MST3K* movie helped introduce *This Island Earth* to an entirely new generation of fans who may have never viewed the film otherwise, and, even though the feature was riffed on, *MST3K* enthusiasts did not view the movie as "being made fun of," and instead would come to hold the film close to their hearts. This may be one of the key reasons new merchandise of the Metaluna Mutant is still a top seller for toymakers. This article's author, in full disclosure, was introduced to the film thanks to those wise-cracking robots, and couldn't be happier for their efforts – and thanks to *MST3K*, I per-

sonally own dozens of rare Metaluna merchandise that I fondly associate with Mike and the 'bots.

In a true twist for Monster Kids, the only decently filmed documentary on the making of *This Island Earth* that gives fans the opportunity to learn more about the film's history came in the form of a feature titled *This Island Earth: 2 1/2 Years in the Making*, which actually comes paired with *MST3K: The Movie*'s Blu-ray release. A 50-minute documentary showcasing a retrospective look back on this *MST3K* feature was produced by Bally-Hoo Motion Pictures, specifically for the BD of *Mystery Science Theater: The Movie*. Directed by Daniel Griffith, this making-of doc contains a treasure trove of amazing behind-the-scenes video, showcasing not only the making of the movie, but giving viewers true insight into how the *MST3K* crew went about setting the production into motion (which saw release soon after the TV series jettisoned from Comedy Central), as well as insight into the riffed film selection, *This Island Earth*. Of all featurettes and interviews that have accompanied Shout! Factory's impressive *MST3K* releases, this Blu-ray definitely takes the cake as the most informative and satisfying for fans of both *This Island Earth* and *MST3K*.

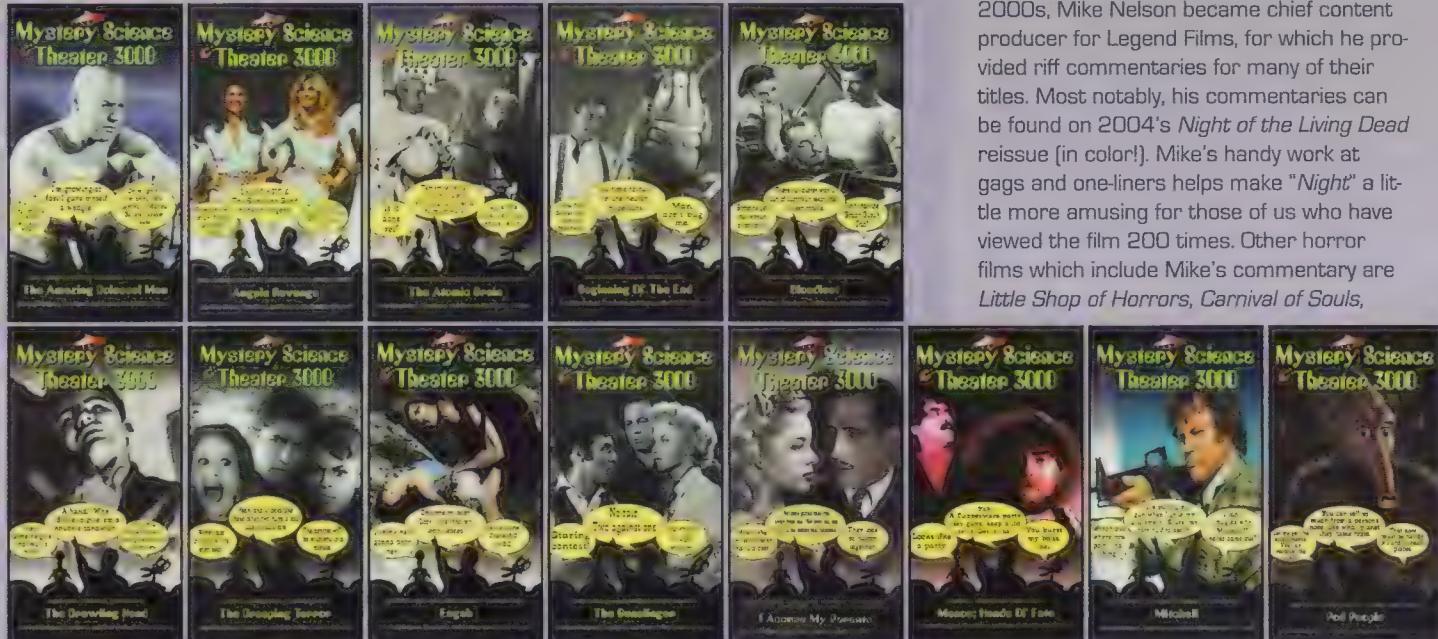
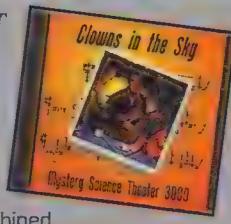
### Sci-Fi Channel

Moving to the Sci-Fi Channel, the series' eighth season didn't help its status with classic Monster Kids, as the series began to tackle movies that are held with a higher regard in the hearts of classic horror fans ... films which included *Revenge of the Creature*, *The Deadly Mantis*, *The Mole People*, *The She Creature*, *I Was a Teenage*

*Werewolf*, and *The Horror of Party Beach*. This extra emphasis on sci-fi/horror came off the heels of the show's new network's demand of having episodes to coincide with the channel's theme, combined with licenses in which the Universal-owned cable company maintained.

This eighth season was also the first to not include Trace Beaulieu, who had left the show at the conclusion of season seven [Frank Conniff had already left at the end of the series' sixth season], allowing Mary Jo Pehl to take over as lead-villain Pearl [Mary Jo had previously been co-starring as Dr. Forrester's mother during the show's seventh season]. She was joined by silly side-kicks Professor Bobo (played by Murphy in monkey makeup) and the Observer (or "Brain Guy" – played by writer Bill Corbett, who also stepped into the now-vacated role of Crow T. Robot). The new gang of baddies never connected the way Frank and Forrester had, as their antics involved time travel, chasing the "Satellite" in space [in a flying van, harkening back to Mel Brooks' *Space Balls*], and just causing shenanigans in general. The show still managed to last a few more seasons, but was ultimately cancelled in 1999, at the conclusion of its 10th season (and clocking in an impressive 197 total television episodes).

Since *MST3K*'s cancellation, the crew behind the Satellite of Love have never stopped mocking good and bad cinema. Soon after the series ended, Mike Nelson began lending his talents to DVD production companies, recording new "riff" commentaries to special select releases. In the mid-2000s, Mike Nelson became chief content producer for Legend Films, for which he provided riff commentaries for many of their titles. Most notably, his commentaries can be found on 2004's *Night of the Living Dead* reissue (in color!). Mike's handy work at gags and one-liners helps make "Night" a little more amusing for those of us who have viewed the film 200 times. Other horror films which include Mike's commentary are *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Carnival of Souls*,



*House on Haunted Hill*, and *Plan 9 from Outer Space*. These commentary tracks, however, were but the first step in the continued legacy of *MST3K*, and its eventual return.

#### The Film Crew

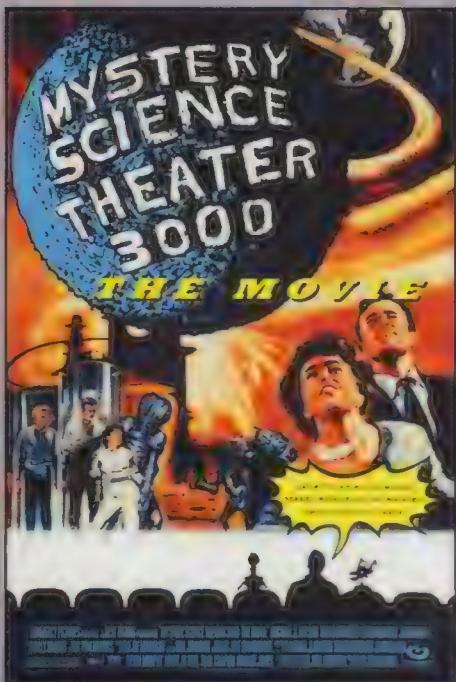
Charged with the job of providing commentary tracks for movies that may never receive them otherwise, *The Film Crew* (consisting of Michael J. Nelson, Bill Corbett, and Kevin Murphy) were the initial "return to form" for our final three *MST* hosts, who found themselves on television spoofing *Three Stooges* public-domain films and in segments created for cable stations American Movie Classics, Starz/Encore, and the Sundance Channel.

*The Film Crew* were set to take their talents to home video, thanks to a deal with Rhino Home Video, however, after a small hiccup, a limited series of DVDs were eventually released thanks to Shout! Factory in 2007. The films riffed in this short-lived series included *The Giant of Marathon*, *Hollywood After Dark*, *Killers from Space*, and *Wild Women of Wanga*.

#### RiffTrax

During the lag-time in between the formation of *The Film Crew* and its eventual home-video release, *RiffTrax* was formed. Originally in conjunction with Legend Films (Legend was later bought out), *RiffTrax* was formed as a Web site offering the purchase of downloadable audio commentaries for legitimate films (which include everything from big-budget releases like *The Twilight Saga* and *Lord of the Rings* to vintage *MST3K*-style films and shorts like *Carnival of Souls* and *The Amazing Mr. X*).

Over the 10 years since *RiffTrax* was formed, the company began to not only riff more popular feature films, but their handy work soon found itself attached to home-video releases as bonus content (on such DVDs as *Incredible Two-Headed Transplant* and *The Astro-Zombies*). *RiffTrax* even began to issue DVDs of their work, with nearly 50 titles in their video catalog. In 2015, *RiffTrax* even struck a deal to offer *MST3K* episodes for sale in both digital and physical formats on their Web sites, per-



haps laying the groundwork for what was about to come. Possibly the most successful aspect of this company was the creation of their *RiffTrax Live!* events.

In partnership with Fathom Events, *RiffTrax Live!* launched in 2009 with a live screening of *Plan 9 from Outer Space*. The stage event was simulcast to theaters

across the US and soon garnered a cult following. Thanks to fan support, the live events and screenings have maintained a healthy success and even resulted in *RiffTrax* Kickstarter campaigns to help aid in acquiring rights to some pricier film projects like 1998's *Godzilla* and *Twilight* (sadly, they could not secure the rights to *Twilight*, regardless of money, and instead delivered a riffed screening of *Starship Troopers*). Some of their most popular live shows include *The Room*, *Sharknado*, and *Mothra*.

On June 28, 2016, *RiffTrax* held their 20th live-stage event in a show dubbed "Night of the Shorts" and featured special riff guests that included former *MST3K* writers and characters Joel Hodgson, Trace Beaulieu, Frank Conniff, Bridget Nelson, Mary Jo Pehl, and newcomer Jonah Ray. This served as a special 10th-anniversary *RiffTrax* event and *MST3K* reunion – and can be purchased on DVD and Blu-ray at [www.rifftrax.com](http://www.rifftrax.com) today.

#### Cinematic Titanic

Joel Hodgson at long last returned to the funny business of riffing in late 2007 with a direct-to-video series titled *Cinematic Titanic*.

The show featured a cast of silhouettes (more than some dude with robots) riffing B movies, which showcased more intricate sight-gags along with a more vintage *MST3K* joke-vibe not heard since 1993, when Joel was last seen on the *Satellite of Love*. This series co-starred former *MST3K* alumni Trace Beaulieu, J. Elvis Weinstein, Frank Conniff, and Mary Jo Pehl. The overall "plot" of the series involved a crew participating in some weird experiment where they must riff movies in order to save the world? (To be honest, the plot



**Did You Know?** Mike Nelson has released various books over the past 17 years, including 2000's *Movie Megacheese*, 2002's *Mind over Matters*, and 2016's *Death Rat!: A Novel*.



To help promote the new *MST3K*, premiering on Netflix this spring, creator Joel Hodgson sat down with *HorrorHound*'s Nathan Hanneman to discuss the latest incarnation of the series, and what went into the making of this new iteration:

**HorrorHound:** You appeared at *HorrorHound Weekend* in March of 2015, and while there, you confided that plans were underway to bring *MST3K* back in some capacity. Eight months later, the Kickstarter was announced. How much time really went into developing what seems to be such a well-chosen new cast and crew?

**JH:** Up until a month to six weeks before the Kickstarter launched, I thought Trace, Frank, and Mary Jo were going to be involved, and I knew that we wanted to use Kinga [Felicia Day] and Patton [Oswalt], but it wasn't like they had that big of a role. In that space of time, for all different reasons, Mary Jo, Trace, and Frank didn't get involved, so that meant I had to come out stronger with an all-new cast. Fortunately, when we got on the other side, we were able to get Mary Jo, Kevin, and Bill involved. They're in the new show, and they appear throughout the series – and Mary Jo and Bill write on the show – so we were able to get them involved, which I am really glad about.

**HH:** Will these past cast mates appear as their prior characters? I know you revealed you would also appear on-screen.

**JH:** Yeah, absolutely. They come back as their evil selves. Kinga is the daughter of Dr. Clayton Forrester and the granddaughter of Pearl, so it's kind of continuity of the original show.

**HH:** Did you keep up with the show's storylines after you left in the fifth season?

**JH:** I knew about Pearl, Bobo, Brain Guy ... I knew about the story where they weren't in a satellite no more, and they were traveling through space, during the Sci-Fi years. We've been doing Turkey Day for the last three years, and we tried to create a list of the top Mike episodes and Joel episodes. So, to find the Mike episodes, I started screening those. In the last three years, I got familiar with those episodes and kind of how they worked.

*continued on next page.*

was never fully fleshed out for viewers, nor did that matter.)

The first feature film "riffed" as part of *Cinematic Titanic* was *Brain of Blood* [aka *The Dazing Skull*], *The Wasp Woman*, *Legacy of Blood*, and so on. Videos of the series could have been purchased online [for download] at a cost of \$9.99, or on physical DVD for \$15.94. After seven initial releases, *Cinematic Titanic* went on the road for a series of successful live shows. These live events became so popular that the continuation of the video releases were dubbed *Cinematic Titanic Live!*, and included such films as *The Alien Factor* [one of this writer's most favorite of any riff projects] and *Rattlers*. Sadly, after 12 total video releases, the DVDs began to dry up.

*Cinematic Titanic* was short-lived, and, in 2013, the company sold the last of their DVD stock and ceased to exist. But with every end, comes a beginning ...

### MST3K Returns

In 2007, the official *MST3K* Web site returned with all new merchandise and all new videos ... this time with a little less mock. The new videos [which were initially available on [www.MST3K.com](http://www.MST3K.com), but may still be found on YouTube], featured animated versions of the robots, Crow, Tom Servo, and Gypsy.



Instead of joking on movies, we were treated to random moments of "fun," ranging from fishing to playing cards ... while the quality of the shorts may have been questionable, the excitement in seeing fresh new "adventures" for our robo-friends wasn't. The shorts were voiced by Paul Chaplin [Crow], James Moore [Tom Servo], and Jim Mallon [Gypsy]. The official Web site had included behind-the-scenes videos and a webstore with shirts, hats, and other assorted products featuring classic images from the show as well as new logos based on the animated shorts. All these new items were from the mind of Jim Mallon, who had maintained ownership of *MST3K* throughout all these years.

All the while, Shout! Factory had [at the time] acquired the rights to release *MST3K* on DVD, and picked up exactly where Rhino Home Video left off [literally – the DVD sets even continued the numbering system established at Rhino]. Over the next many years, Shout! Factory delivered some of the greatest home-video packages any MSTie could ask for, pairing up four-packs of episodes with some amazing documentary and extra features [produced by Ballyhoo Motion Pictures]. Special anniversary sets were issued in tin packaging or with special action figurine pairings [including Crow, Tom Servo, and Gypsy]. *MST3K* became available for viewing on

Netflix, and quickly grew to be one of the network's most popular series. With the show's interest growing in alternate media, its continued success with Shout! Factory's releases on home video,

and Netflix, it was only a matter of time before the *Satellite of Love* would make a legitimate comeback. In 2015, unknown to the rest of the world, Joel Hodgson worked with Shout! Factory to purchase *MST3K* back from Jim Mallon and what happened next broke the Internet.

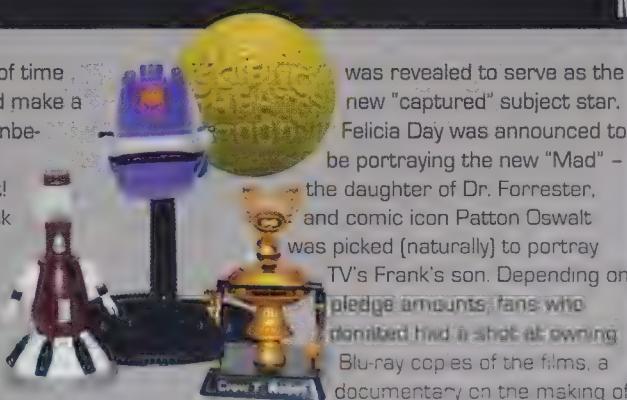
#### Kickstarter

In November of 2015, one of the most exciting new Kickstarters was announced – the potential return of *Mystery Science Theater 3000*! In just one month, the project became the most funded film/video Kickstarter ever, raising more than \$6.3 million (and surpassing *Veronica Mars*, which previously held the title for highest funded movie with \$5.7 million in 2013). The project needed \$2 million to green light the return of the *Satellite of Love* (which would have resulted in three new episodes), but because of immense fan support, the series ended up with enough funding to produce 14 episodes (including a Christmas special). The Kickstarter's final days coincided with a live "telethon" for Turkey Day (an annual Thanksgiving tradition for MSTies, marathoning the series' most beloved episodes). The Kickstarter ended with an astounding 48,270 backers.

The attention the project garnered allowed the series' producers to shop the show around to a multitude of networks and cable channels, in hopes of finalizing a home for the returning show – and possibly more! As the Kickstarter was in progress, Joel Hodgson did an amazing job consistently renewing fan support with announcements to the potential series' cast and crew. Comedian Jonah Ray



**Fun Fact:** Shout! Factory offered exclusive DVDs titled "Fancy Award Previews Special" and "Summer Blockbuster Review" which came with pre-sold copies of *MST*'s *XXXVI* and *XXXVII* box sets.



was revealed to serve as the new "captured" subject star. Felicia Day was announced to be portraying the new "Mad" – the daughter of Dr. Forrester, and comic icon Patton Oswalt was picked (naturally) to portray TV's Frank's son. Depending on pledge amounts, fans who donated had a shot at owning Blu-ray copies of the films, a documentary on the making of this new season, shirts, cups, keychains, autographed posters, or the actual screen-used Crow T. Robot and Tom Servo props. The Kickstarter was an insane hit, so it was no surprise when word got out that the new *MST3K* was in talks to receive a full-fledged return to television. A new home was finally announced, as the series will premiere in the spring of 2017 on Netflix. Pending successful ratings, Joel Hodgson and crew may never have to ask fans for funding support again as the series could receive full series backing from its new streaming home.

All in all, what else can be said about a show that has maintained such intense cult status and support for nearly 30 years? People love watching cheesy movies, but they seem to REALLY love watching cheesy movies with friends. What better friends than Joel, Mike, Crow, Tom Servo ... and (soon) Jonah? The new series will feature some redesigns, including a new logo, set, additional robots, and a few extra surprises, but one thing is assured. The end result will be entertaining and hilarious. And if not? You can always riff on the episodes yourself. Until this spring, we will anxiously be awaiting "Movie Sign!"

**HH:** In one of the backer emails, you introduced a new 'bot. Will we see many new characters like this in the new run?

**JH:** I don't want to reveal too much, but I am interested in bringing in new 'bots. You'll see in the context of the new series how they're used, and this is something I can talk about a little bit about, but we are starting to give Gypsy a little more stuff to do. A little 'creative hug.' We haven't spent much bandwidth on her, so we are going to have her be involved more.

**HH:** There hasn't been much discussion about Crow and Servo. Have you taken measures to keep their character personalities and voices as close to the original series as possible?

**JH:** No, because at this point now, each character's been played by three different people. Gypsy's been played by four different people. It's like trying to rein in *Dr. Who* or something. My thinking is, there's so many things they have to do when riffing in the theater that I want them to be themselves, so Baron [Vaughn] and Hampton [Yount], I gave them licenses to just be themselves and do it the way they want to do it. I didn't do too much to shape them, outside of Hampton is really like Crow, and Baron is really like Tom Servo, personality-wise. That had nothing to do with me, as I had Jonah [Ray] pick those guys, because Jonah had to have the relationship with the performers, so he went and found those guys. It's how we always did it. I don't get too involved with shaping the characters – it just kind of happens naturally.

**HH:** You're using a lot of new methods to create your props and 'bots this go-round. Can you tell us a bit about how Tom Servo and Crow were designed for the original series?

**JH:** After I quit doing standup, I went back to Minneapolis, and I got fascinated with collaging robots out of found material and selling them out of a store called Props in Minneapolis. So in that process, I probably made over 100 robots. So I had a style I kind of created, and I decided it would be a good idea to use this method of collaging things to make these robots. I was pretty good at it. I didn't design them on paper. For the new robots we have, I did it the same way, I collaged them. I made [maquettes], and from those, I handed them over to different fabricators to do the hard work. To make them light enough – and work.

**HH:** When will fans find out what movies will be utilized (and riffed) in the new season?

**JH:** I don't really want to build up what the movies are. To me, *MST* works better when you don't know what the movies are. It's like going to a haunted house on the edge of town with some funny friends. You don't want to know what it is. Most people will find out what the 14 movies are when the Netflix episodes are available.

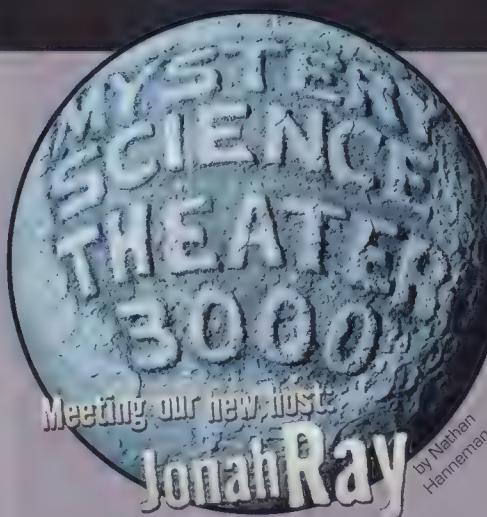
When the new season of *Mystery Science Theater 3000* was announced, one of the details that surprised the *MST* fan base was that neither Joel nor Mike would be returning to host. Instead, the role was granted to Jonah Ray, stand-up comic and co-host of *The Nerdist Podcast*. This Hawaii-native slowly worked his way through Hollywood, working on [and off-screen] on such shows as *The Soup*, *The Andy Milonakis Show*, and *The Meltdown with Jonah and Kumail*. On top of *MST3K*, which premieres on Netflix this spring, Jonah is also the star of the Seeso original series *Hidden America with Jonah Ray*. We were given an opportunity to interview Jonah Ray in preparation for the *MST* relaunch to cover all aspects of what it takes to step into this coveted silhouette-based theater.

**HorrorHound:** So, be honest. Just how much prodding did it take to get you to agree to the hosting job for *MST3K*'s return?

**Jonah Ray:** [Laughs] If it wasn't me, I may have murdered or plotted to murder whoever actually did get the hosting duties. It's been my childhood dream. I don't know how I would've been able to handle it if I wasn't the host.

**HH:** I had heard that you used to fantasize about bringing back *MST3K*?

**JR:** Yeah, I thought about it a lot. It was my favorite show. It had been off the air for a few years. My first meeting this management company brought me in for – a bunch of people sitting in a room – and they go, "What would the *Jonah Show* be?" ... it's the general question they ask in these meetings. I said, "I think we should try to bring back *Mystery Science Theater 3000* with me as the host" ... and they all laughed at me. This was like in 2003, so it hadn't been off the air that long, so it still had the stink of cancelation on it.



**HH:** So, you obviously watched *MST3K* when it originally aired.

**JR:** Oh yeah. I watched it when it was on Comedy Central. I started ... maybe in year three? I think that's when Comedy Central came to Hawaii. Me and my friend, Donald, just became obsessed with it.

It was weird. I think as a kid, there's a lot of times you're into something and you don't understand why a lot of people aren't into it, but for me, I always feel like I got why it wasn't for everybody. Because it really checked off a lot of boxes, like silly comedy, subversive comedy, sci-fi, prop comedy ... I would never try to push it on anybody who wasn't into it.

**HH:** What would you say are your favorite classic episodes?

**JR:** *Santa Claus Conquers the Martians* ... *Diabolik* was really good, too. I remember watching that one at my friend Donald's house. I remember I was sleeping over, because stuff wasn't good at home ... it was one of those things people say about the show – it was comforting. It's incredibly comforting. It kind of made me feel OK for a while.

Also, the *MST3K* movie, because that was a huge thing. I was visiting my aunt and uncle in Carson City, Nevada. My uncle said, "I have

the night off. Let me know what you want to do." So, I was looking at the paper and I saw what movies were playing in Reno and one of the films was the *Mystery Science Theater* movie. I had him drive me to Reno to watch it. It never came to Hawaii. It was my one chance to see it. I was so excited, and I felt so awesome coming back home. I was able to tell my friends that I got to see it in the theater. "The silhouette seats went all the way across!" [Laughs]

**HH:** I like that you refer to *MST3K* as comforting. I personally have a tradition that dates back to when it originally aired. Thanks to VHS and DVD, I always try to watch an episode every Saturday evening as I go to sleep. My wife and I still do this when we can.

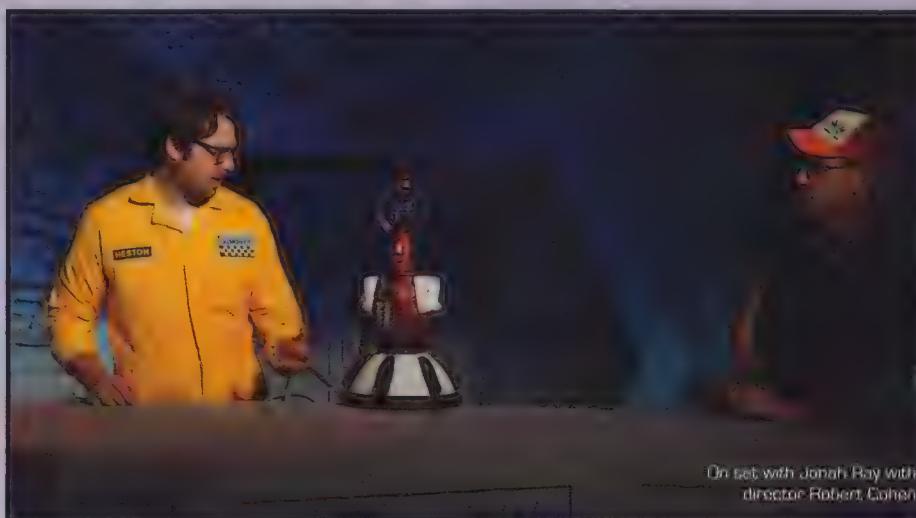
**JR:** Oh man, me too. Especially the movie. When I was young, when they started coming out on VHS, I could never make up my mind as to which ones I wanted, so when the movie came out on VHS, I grabbed it really fast. That's the one I would put on when going to sleep like every night! That's the one I know by heart.

**HH:** OK – moment of truth: who is your favorite host? Or are you allowed to answer that?

**JR:** They would allow me to. It's really tough to choose. That was the weird thing about everyone going "Joel's better" or "Mike's better" ... I could never pick. There's so much from each of them that was great to me. Mike's tough-guy voice in the riffs – he was good at that stuff. Joel was so low-fi when it came to his performance and riffing style. It was kind of punk rock. This guy's not nailing everything, but he's still doing it. I mean ... I don't know. Do you have a favorite?

**HH:** I didn't know there were camps who picked one over the other until the Internet came around. I always leaned toward the movie cast ... but the show didn't exist during the age of social media, so there were no immediate online reactions to cast changes. Having said that, now that we live in the age of social media, what has the reaction been like in terms of all the new ... everything! New "Mads," new 'bot voices, new you?

**JH:** You know ... I got – surprisingly – a lot of support. More than I thought. I have the same kind of brain. I remember when Mike showed up, that I got a bit upset. "I don't care if he played Torgo in sketches, he's not Joel!" I know that feeling and I get it. Even when there was the occasional tweet from someone saying I was going to ruin their favorite show, I was like, "ehhh, I get it." If I was bored, I would



On set with Jonah Ray with director Robert Cohen

have probably said the same thing to whoever got the part. Everyone has their voice. You have to filter it out. With every good, there's bad. As Joel would say, "It's ying and yang, man!"

**HH:** I thought it was smart, it was brave, and it was the right move to not bring someone back.

JR: Joel was very adamant about that. Even talking to the other guys, it was a good move. I understand why people would be upset. As we discussed earlier, the show is about comfort. It was comfortable, and because it hasn't been on in such a long time, it never had a chance to change. The thing you go to comfort for – that's never changed – now has the ability to be different. I understand why people may balk at the idea of different voices and faces. The spirit of it is very much there.

**HH:** I spoke with Joel earlier, and he mentioned something I had not read anywhere. He said he gave you the opportunity to cast Tom Servo and Crow?

JR: Yeah ... he asked me. I asked who he was thinking for Servo and Crow? "Are you bringing back Trace? Kevin, or Bill?" And he said, "Oh no, man, for me, I had to perform with those guys, and this was a document of what was going on in Minneapolis comedy at that time." Joel is a prop guy, the other guys were writing jokes. He wanted it to represent what was happening there and now. When he asked me about the voices of Servo and Crow, he said it should be people I know, who I get along with, and have a pre-existing relationship with.

When it came to Crow, my mind didn't go any further ... I was going to probably suggest Hampton [Yount] anyway. Hampton, to me, has always been Crow. When I saw him do standup, he was still living in Virginia. Me and my friends were doing a standup show in D.C. and [he] showed up and asked if he could open, and we said, "sure, you weird skinny kid in a Nine Inch Nails T-shirt." He went up on stage and he had this nihilistic joy, this kind of scary, serial-killer-at-a-park vibe to him. Getting to know him over the years, he's one of the funniest comics around, but the temper of his voice is very much like Crow. So there was no question, I was going to ask Hampton.

When it came to Servo, I asked Joel, "Do you want that voice? That *la-la-la*?" And he said, "I don't know, man, when it comes to Servo, I always thought of him as this bad-ass ladies man. I always thought he was a black guy." And I went, "Oh my god! I am thinking of Baron Vaughn right now! This guy that loves singing, and performing, and Shakespeare ... he can sing like crazy and he's a suave awesome dude." He was the go-to guy. Plus, both



Cast photo, L to R: Felicia Day, Hampton Yount, Jonah Ray, director Robert Cohen, Baron Vaughn, series creator and executive producer Joel Hodgson, Patton Oswalt.

of them are insanely good at impressions. It wasn't much of a thought process for me

**HH:** Last fall, you went on stage for the *RiffTrax/MST3K* anniversary special, which was screened in theaters across the country. It was the first time fans could see you riff *MST*-style. Can you talk about that experience?

JR: It was scary. I met a few of those people here and there through doing comedy. I've known Frank for years, but I never met Trace or Mary Jo or Bridget ... I guess I met Bill and Mike and Kevin through *The Nerdist*. In that situation, I'm not a guy they will remember. I am Chris Hardwick's lackey, you know? I was really nervous about meeting everybody because they're my comedy heroes. On top of that, there was the performance I had to do. Up until the morning of, Joel and I were still punching up the short. We wanted to really do a good job on the short, and I was very nervous and scared, and I wanted to watch the show more than anything else. Everyone was really awesome and very welcoming to me. They treated me like I was one of the gang. It was great. When I went on stage, I heard the audience reaction and I was reminding myself, "That's for Joel. You're next to 'Big Papa.'" I just did my best and Joel was really sweet and the audience seemed to respond.

**HH:** Joel stated that he wouldn't reveal the chosen riffed films prior to the premiere, which is sort of genius. Over the years, one of the things I have noticed is that it's the older "monster kid" era of fans who don't really dig what *MST3K* does. I love the movies from the series. I had never watched *This Island Earth* prior to *MST* and because of it, I now own so many Metaluna col-

lectibles and merchandise and love anything Metaluna.

JR: You never "Metaluna" you didn't like? [Laughs]

**HH:** Exactly! [Laughs] So, I like the anonymity of not knowing the films before the series launches. If you revealed the full episode guide in advance, fans would dissect the choices and create ideas of what to expect. Every movie seems to be known in this day and age.

JR: You know ... you'd be surprised. Of every movie on this list, I had heard of one in weird Drafthouse circles ... one of the movies, but that's it! Only one! It's pretty crazy. I said the same thing. "Well, clearly, I'm going to know all these movies, and there's no way this many movies are bad." But, I was wrong. There are so many weird movies from all over the world, just decades and decades of them being made.

**HH:** Well, it's not long before we know just how well received you and the new shows are. But, still, admit – just how anxious are you to get to work on another season?

JR: Oh, so much. That's the thing, I am now watching these episodes in the order we wrote and filmed them in, and I am going, "right, OK, let's do another season!" Even though I think it's great, I just want to get back in there and do it again and do it even better.

**HH:** It's like bowling. You get better the more times you step out there.

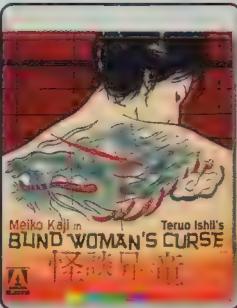
JR: Exactly! And like bowling, you get better the more you drink! That's something I'll probably try next season! 



# VIDEO INVASION

ARROW VIDEO

BY DEAN BOOR



In the horror community, there are a few things fans look for when picking up a new movie release; sometimes the casting takes front seat or maybe there's a particular director that's sought out (or avoided). Who wrote the movie could be a consideration, and then there's the producer (in lesser cases). One of the last things that could sway a fan into checking out said title is which studio or label was responsible for releasing the project. Sure, there have been times when New Line Cinema, Lionsgate, or Cannon meant something towards the quality of film in which you were about to receive. But those moments were few and far between. But when it comes to home-video releases, scrolling through the horror Blu-ray section at your local store (or nowadays, online), companies have meant more to a video release. Because some companies just seem to truly care about what goes into the production of their sets ... the quality of content. But in the last two years, one company has really struck a chord with US customers ... a company who've actually been around for years in the UK, and are just now making their impact known abroad. Of course, we are talking about Arrow Video.

Arrow releases aren't easily ignored and are instantly recognizable. If you've ever scrolled through the Arrow catalog, you can immediately relate. Their titles include *Bride of Re-Animator*, *Eaten Alive*, *Spider-Baby*, and

*Driller Killer*, to name a few. Not content with just releasing a stand-out classic in a DVD/Blu-ray combo pack, Arrow is known for incorporating an extensive range of special features on their releases along with specially commissioned artwork from renowned artists within the industry. Arrow is now enjoying 25 years in the business (only the last two of which have included US distribution) and

delectable artwork!

**HorrorHound:** Tell us a little about Arrow, how it started, and what your role has been.

Francesco Simeoni: Arrow is a family-run business that was started by Neil and Angie Agran. At that time, it was focused on cult and world cinema on VHS. Early releases included *Cinema Paradiso* and *Hellraiser* – releases we are proud to still distribute to this day. In the early 2000s, Alex Agran became CEO and, in 2009, started Arrow Video with the aim of presenting cult films in definitive editions. This started with DVDs of Italian horror classics like *The House by the Cemetery* and *Macabre*, along with other cult titles like *Caligula*, *Dawn* and *Day of the Dead*.

I started in 2010 and continued the label, developing releases and bringing restoration in house as well increasing our slate and ambition. This progressed with key releases like *Zombie Flesh Eaters*, *Big Trouble in Little China*, and *Videodrome*. Alongside Arrow Video, we launched a world cinema label called Arrow Academy in 2011, which touched on the heritage the company started with, focusing on world as well as cult cinema. The intentions from the start were to distribute quality film titles, and that continues through the development of the home-video marketplace, where a higher quality standard is demanded by fans, so we strive for quality

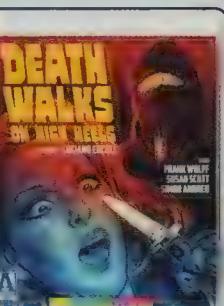
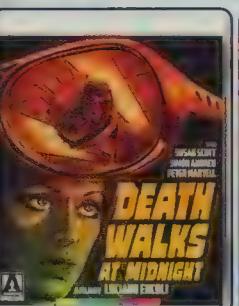


HorrorHound wanted to celebrate Arrow's 25th anniversary by looking back through their ascent to becoming one of the most important horror labels on the scene today.

To help kick off this celebration, we spoke with Francesco Simeoni, the director for content at Arrow Video, to discuss the label and also how they go about choosing all of their



**Arrow Video:** Early Arrow UK releases sometimes included exclusive mini-comic books which came packaged in such films as *Day of the Dead*, *Battle Royale*, *Demons*, and *Demons 2*.



across the board, both in titles and their presentation.

**HH:** How does Arrow go about acquiring titles or particular releases – are there certain qualities you look for in regards to such acquisitions?

FS: We don't just strive for really big titles, as we really enjoy working on titles that see less love; for instance, our release of the works of Herschell Gordon Lewis or our more obscure gialli and yakuza titles, which we shower with as much love as our flagships. Certainly this comes from our creative passion as cinephiles, as well as the feedback from our fans. Whilst many won't recognize *Death Walks at Midnight* and *Death Walks on High Heels*, I certainly feel that it's like a flagship title, but there's no denying that titles like *Phantasm* set more pulses rising!

**HH:** Artwork is one of the main attractions for any Arrow purchase and an obvious element that stands out from other studio releases – you want them all, and you want them to look amazing so you can show them off to other fans. It's a simple idea, have amazing artists illustrate the covers of amazing horror titles. How did this come about?

FS: I guess this was a natural progression. We just thought of the best way to do things. I believe we were the first label to really pioneer reversible sleeves as we did new artwork, but didn't want to ignore the classic originals. This was one point of difference which has now been copied. When you have success, it's hard to stay original. Having really good discs and packaging is our main goal.

**HH:** Truly a dream job for any fan of movies, being able to sit through hours of horror

and work with hours of footage for special features, accompanied by choosing the artists to work on the packaging for the release. How does a horror fan in the industry choose a favorite?

FS: We all really enjoy the creative process, so every title gets a lot of love. I've been personally blown away by so many artworks, and it's such a thrill when you work with an artist that each subsequent one you say that they've topped themselves. We are very fortunate to work with so many talented artists. I couldn't really pick any one or two – there are too many! When a release is physically bigger, it necessarily gets more artwork, so they potentially stand out more, like the artwork to the Herschell Gordon Lewis box or *Donnie Darko*, for instance, only hint at the wonders within.

**HH:** In this day and age, with so much talent in the world of art, it is understandably difficult for an artist to get their work noticed by the likes of industry favorites such as Arrow. Does Arrow choose artists or have artists contacted Arrow directly? What is the process in this selection?

FS: It's a combination; we find a lot of artists, seeking out people by the style of their work who we think will fit the [film]. Sometimes there are contractual requirements ... for instance *Blow Out* needs to have the title and John Travolta and Nancy Allen all in the same size and style on the cover, so anything like that needs to be communicated to the artist in advance. In other cases there are requirements like if you have one actor's likeness, you need to include another, so sometimes this might push the artwork to being more conceptual if you want to focus on one element. We have also been contacted by vari-

ous talented artists that we have worked with based on their submissions to us.

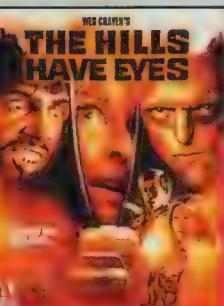
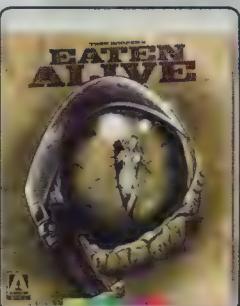
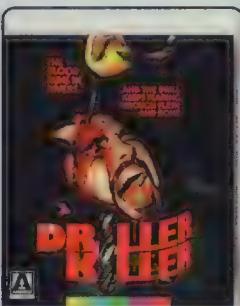
**HH:** What takes priority – the artwork or the special features?

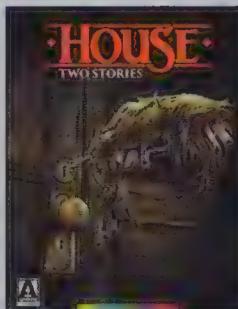
FS: We will always try and deliver in all ways, but sometimes you can't do everything. For example, when we released *Withnail and I*, we felt the artwork was so iconic and had two great variants; it would have been stupid to do it again. The original [had] amazing Ralph Steadman pieces which couldn't be bettered, so we focused on the disc extras and the packaging [a 200-page book], but this is a priority by choice rather than limitation, I feel. As I say, we always try to deliver on all fronts!

**HH:** Arrow boldly decided to venture into distribution and release Region 1 (U.S.) Blu-rays and DVDs in the US. What led to that jump?

FS: At the time we [made] the decision, we felt that there were not any distributors doing what we were doing. When we started, Kino and Scorpion and others were not very active. In the time it took us to set up and acquire our catalog, they came on, so it's a more competitive marketplace, but that competition, I believe, has been good for all. Firstly, for the customer who gets higher quality releases, but also for the industry itself, which is spurred on by the excitement of these fans who are perpetuating the life of physical media. We felt that if there was a lack of people doing gialli and yakuza pictures and blaxploitation and Euro horror, then that's something that would be easy for us to do.

We already knew that there were fans out there who wanted it, as they were asking us to make our releases region free (something we can't always contractually do). It also enabled us to be able to restore certain films





we couldn't do as a small UK-only distributor. Sharing the costs over two territories makes it much more viable to give smaller releases like *Blood Rage* or *The Night Evelyn Came Out of the Grave* a chance to be released in definitive editions.

**HH:** We're already aware that the UK didn't really have anything else like Arrow until recent years, whereas the U.S. has a few similar distributors.

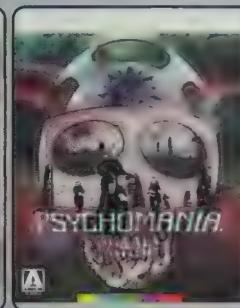
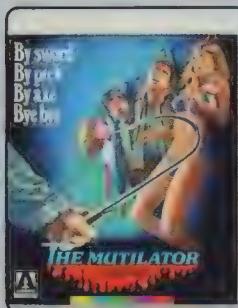
FS: Much like the situation described above with Kino and Scorpion and others, the UK is

experiencing a resurgence in this kind of cinema and catalog home entertainment in general; lots of newer labels have popped up in recent years, like 88 Films, Final Cut, and Indicator, along with more established names like Second Sight, Studio Canal, and Eureka. This has caused the industry to bounce back a bit from the doom-and-gloom the press reports about, i.e., the decline of physical media (though the industry as a whole is down, I think the catalog business is more robust). I think a more competitive marketplace is better overall for driving interest in the medium. What sets us apart is the

approach we take, whilst some might do new restorations and artwork and special packaging and booklets, there are very few that do it all and do it the way we do. I certainly think there are few distributors out there that would do what we did for the films of Herschell Gordon Lewis!

**HH:** Interestingly, the initial launch into the U.S. for Arrow was powered via Indiegogo, a slightly alternative route, considering the scale of the task.

FS: There were a number of reasons for



## The Arrow Artists:

Original artwork created for Arrow is key in contributing to their continued success, allowing the company to stand out in the marketplace amidst other horror titles. *HorrorHound* was keen to catch up with some of the talent involved in creating the art that graces the covers for us to collect. We were graciously given time from two of Arrow's most popular artists, Gary Pullin and Graham Humphreys, to discuss the importance of their art medium's impact on the video marketplace.

Gary Pullin is a renowned artist who has worked in the publishing and home-video industry for the past decade, having worked for *Rue Morgue Magazine*, and produced artwork for *HorrorHound*, as well as companies such as Shout! Factory, MGM, Fox, Waxwork, and Mondo. He has produced many pieces of art for Arrow for both their Euro-distributed titles, as well as U.S.-based productions.

Graham Humphreys is a legendary horror illustrator and graphic designer with an extensive resume dating into the golden era of horror releases (aka the '80s), having worked on designing and illustrating original UK movie

campaigns for such titles as *Evil Dead*, *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, and *Basket Case*.

**HorrorHound:** How did you originally come to produce work for Arrow?

Graham Humphreys: I was contacted by Francesco at Arrow about the possibility of working on a new illustration for *Slaughter High* - an older title from the early 1980s. Francesco thought that, as an artist whose work (for some) is synonymous with the period, I might be well suited for the project - in effect, recreating the feel of the era.

Gary Pullin: I first met Arrow while I was working at *Rue Morgue* as art director. It was 2011, and they emailed me and asked if I'd be interested in creating cover art for Wes Craven's *Deadly Blessings*. I was pretty excited that they found me because I had known of their releases and really liked the retro-styled cover artwork. I was also well aware of the caliber of artists they were commissioning. I consider guys like Graham Humphreys and Tom Hodges legends in the film industry, and I felt like I needed to really make artwork that could stand up on the shelf beside them.

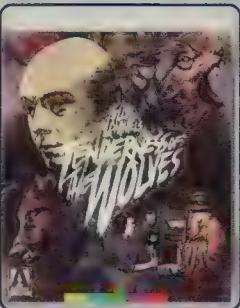
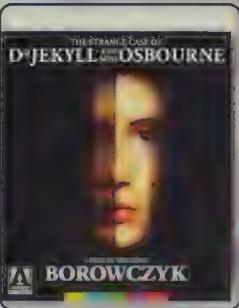
**HH:** As artists who are celebrated for your works within the horror industry, would you mind giving us just a few of your favorite creations for Arrow over the years?

GH: *Inferno* (it's Argento's finest moment, for me), *The Fall of the House of Usher* (it's Vincent Price!), *Lisa and the Devil*, *Frankenhooker*, *Blood and Black Lace* (it's Bava!), *City of the Dead* (as of writing, not yet released), *Super Bitch* (great retro fun), *Nightmare City*, *Night Child*, *Count Yorga* ... I could go on but it's a long list of great films I am honored to have worked on.

GP: I'm pretty happy with how *Night of the Comet*, *The Incredible Melting Man*, *The Stuff*, and *LifeForce* turned out. Those seem to get the biggest responses from collectors.

**HH:** Does Arrow give you a set of guidelines to work from, or do you get free rein on the designs?

GH: Each job is different. Sometimes Arrow is clear in their requirement - in terms of portraiture or specific elements, sometimes I get free



announcing our launch via Indiegogo; the first was being able to have a longer lead on our announcement, as we took time to set everything up whilst allowing people to preorder releases at a discounted rate. This would have been harder to do with lots of retailers with long dates. The second was to be able to engage with the fan community through the platform, which was difficult to do through a simple Web site [we were in the process of overhauling our UK Web site and wanted to wait for that before progressing to a U.S. site, so we needed a hub by which we could communicate]. The platform also allowed us to

engage with U.S. fans and to try and gauge enthusiasm for our kinds of releases, a big surge at the platform would have given us the confidence to release more titles per month or start more slowly, so it was great to get that feedback to help us plan for the future.

**HH:** Arrow has certainly provided 25 years of innovation and splendor where the artwork is involved. Having broke into the U.S., one wonders where Arrow is headed next.

**FS:** We have just announced that Arrow Video's sister label Arrow Academy will

launch in the U.S. and Canada in March 2017, so that's very exciting. This label focuses on art and classic cinema, and we have some exciting releases coming up! For Arrow Video, we're very excited for our forthcoming slate, which will focus on a lot of similar areas we've already covered with more Italian and Japanese exploitation and genre films, U.S. slashers, finalizing *American Horror Project Volume 2*, films by Frank Henenlotter, Brian Yuzna, Dario Argento, George Romero, and more!



rein... although there is a matter of trust, in that I am expected to understand what is necessary to sell the film and work with empathy for any given title.

**GP:** I try and come up with a compelling image that really gets the film in one [picture], or I'll play with concepts that fans of the film hopefully can resonate with.

**HH:** Gary – you are largely known for working with bright colors in your creations. Do you have a preferred method you work to, and have you always enjoyed working with bright colors for horror?

**GP:** I think I get that from my first encounter with the vivid monster portraits on the covers of *Famous Monsters of Filmland Magazine* by Basil Gogos. I was looking for back issues of *Mad Magazine* when I was a kid, and I'll never forget the impact that those painted covers had on me. I loved how Gogos took monsters that were filmed in black and white and gave them life with multiple light

sources and vivid colors to convey atmosphere and to

highlight certain areas.

When I'm designing a poster, I sometimes take inspiration from that and also even the way a particular film is lit. If it's made in the 1980s, for example, I'll use neon blue or green to convey the era. I love the way films were lit in the '70s and '80s... Dario Argento, Mario Bava, and Stuart Gordon all used bright lighting to create atmosphere. George Romero used comic-book aesthetic for *Creepshow*, and in *The Thing*, John Carpenter used a lot of dramatic lighting for atmosphere. I don't think a poster or a piece of artwork needs to be black, "dark," or bloody to be scary. The original *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* poster is on a white background, but it's a terrifying image.

**HH:** Graham, you have a notable style that stands out. Can you tell us a little about your favored process for creating your artwork? Do you stick to a set method, or try and use different processes?

**GH:** Again, each job is approached differently. There is a technique that I have developed to create maximum effect as swiftly as the budget demands. Each job begins with the image

traced in pencil onto watercolor paper, and then a color wash is applied to create a base texture and color theme. The medium is Designers Gouache paint, in essence a watercolor with an opaque base. It dries quickly allowing me to play with textures as the paint dries on the brush, also taking advantage of the surface texture of the paper. Wherever I don't paint, the underlying wash provides the fill.

The main detail will always be in the portraiture, so the likenesses are the first thing I complete, and then in a hierarchy of focus and detail, I can finish the most important parts first, in case I start running out of time... beyond a certain point, I am paying for my own work! Every job has to be delivered according to the budget, a professional necessity of earning an income and staying in business.

Within each job, there is always room for experimentation – it's an ongoing learning process that allows me to develop and (hopefully) improve. I research all titles, looking at previous campaigns in order to deliver something different to what has gone before. Where reference from the actual film is lacking, I'll often take photographs of poses and especially



**Arrow Video:** Arrow announced that a complete *Phantasm* film collection box set will be released on April 24th in the UK only. This box set will include a replica of the killer sphere.

# VIDEO INVASION: ARROW VIDEO UK

hands (always an important, expressive detail). For instance, for *Blood and Black Lace*, the killer is a photo of me (taken with a 10-second timer) in the nearest clobber I could find among my own clothes! It took about 30 shots before I was happy!

Most color themes have already been formulated whilst watching any film; these are suggested by existing colors and lighting or simply the suggestion of an atmosphere (particularly if it's a black-and-white film).

**HH:** Graham, having seen the industry change from VHS to DVD to Blu-ray and now downloads, do you think the need for physical artwork is still as strong as it was with the new

digital age and movie downloads/streaming?

**GH:** I think it's telling that I am busier now than I've ever been, certainly more so than in the early '80s (the so-called golden age of illustrated covers in home entertainment). Clearly, original art elicits a response that a photo-comp often doesn't. I believe that people appreciate craftsmanship, knowing that passion and labor have been part of the product, something beyond a binary confection. [As with] the films, people can spot a fraud! There are elements of nostalgia, reappraisal, discovery, and the all-important "collector's market." Tangible items are real world; we are still flesh, after all!

**HH:** Is there a particular title you would like to

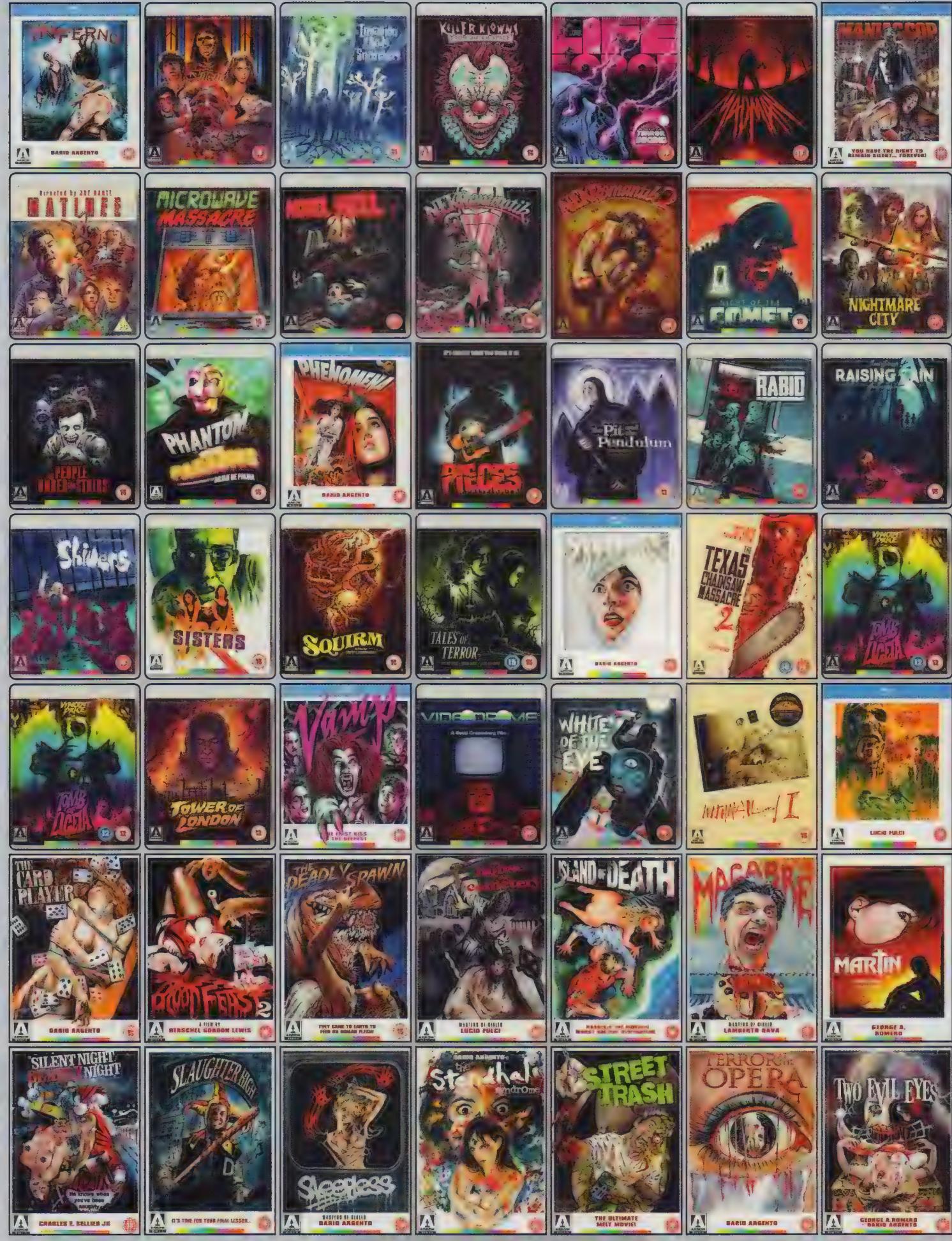
see Arrow pick up in the future, perhaps one that you would like to work on?

**GH:** Yes! *The Keep* and *Shock Waves*, plus all the Hammer Horrors!

**GP:** I'd love to see Arrow release Peter Medak's *The Changeling* on Blu-ray with all the trimmings. I think it's a movie people are still discovering and it's highly influential; directors like Ti West and Mick Garris have always sung its praises. If there was another film on the wish list, then I'd have to say, I'd love to see the Arrow treatment given to the original *My Bloody Valentine*. How great would a tour of the mine locations with the cast and crew in Sydney, Nova Scotia, be? 



**Arrow Video:** While you can spot the various Graham Humphries and Gary Pullin artworks featured throughout this article, one artist that should be mentioned (who did the bulk of the UK cover releases for Arrow) is Rick Melton ...



... some of Rick Melton's best Arrow art (many seen above) incorporate a sexier art style that works better in the UK marketplace. Notable works include *Cardplayer*, *Inferno*, *House by the Cemetery*, *Funhouse*, *Silent Night*, *Deadly Night*, *Sleepless*,

# FAN THERAPY

## SCREENPRINT GALLERIES

Just as cinema and pop-culture trends evolve, so does the cinephile and what they desire to collect. In recent years, one-sheet movie posters, press books, 35mm trailer reels, and studio-issued promo items have been replaced as an alternative medium of collecting has reached new levels of appeal. No longer is it just the hard-core enthusiast who seeks out the next art piece they wish to add to their collection. Instead, pop culture has begun to usher in a newer, more mainstream audience of the modern art print.

Even the most casual fan of television, cinema, and pop culture now has at least a basic knowledge of the recent surge in offerings of modern art prints, posters, and mixed media. There

are a variety of different online galleries, shops, and events around the globe responsible for generating this new wave of art collecting that is drawing the interest of fanatics of all ages. The collector that was once limited to acquiring studio-licensed one-sheet posters or the few random promo items from the local theater, convention circuit, or eBay is now bestowed with a growing market of new opportunities to whet their appetite.

Perhaps you are a casual fan wanting a new poster or piece of art for your home? Or maybe you're an aspiring art connoisseur who wishes to amass a giant collection one day? Whichever category you fit into, this guide will give you a variety of outlets and tips to help get you started.

by Trevor Collins

### HERO COMPLEX GALLERY

Los Angeles, California

Established in 2013, Hero Complex Gallery, or HCG, has catapulted to the top tier of galleries offering modern art posters, prints, and mixed media. A very strong competitor of Mondo, HCG has done very well in terms of licenses, artists, and product selection, which has gained them wide recognition in a considerably short amount of time. HCG enlists many of the same artists that Mondo and other such galleries use for their projects as well as introducing several new up-and-coming artists who have quickly become fan favorites.

HCG also offers a large variety of posters, pins, shirts, original art, and more for their fans. They have some truly unique and original themed exhibitions that HorrorHounds will appreciate, including the *American Horror Story* and *The Walking Dead*, plus the incredible 4 Artist Show: Quattro with a Shotgun, featuring the ultra-talented artists Matt Ryan Tobin, James



Rizzi, Davis, Vance Kelly, and New Flesh. One truly unique series, called Cardistry, showcased reimaginings of the classic playing card by a multitude of different artists. One of the more appealing aspects of HCG is that they put out a decent volume of art, and although some can sell out quickly,

they tend to be easier to acquire than Mondo.

A piece of advice for those seeking information on future events, releases, and tips? Consider joining one of the numerous online social-media collecting groups – many of which have formed communities of collectors, and can open up an arena in which to discuss, trade, sell, and even seek assistance from fellow collectors in acquiring particular pieces. For instance, seeing peers in these groups post pictures at a gallery opening for HCG will better prepare you for the online drop. These drops will follow typically soon after a gallery showing as everything unsold at said exhibition goes online for sale. Contemporary and pop-art themed shows also "pop up" across major cities and can often be discovered thanks to these social-media communities. Visit [hcgart.com](http://hcgart.com) to see for yourself just why this particular gallery is so loved by fans.



**Screen This:** Silver Bow Gallery is a UK-based screenprint company who offers works from famous artists such as Graham Humphreys and Francesco Francavilla. Check them out at [www.silverbowgallery.com](http://www.silverbowgallery.com).



## MONDO

### Austin, Texas

Arguably, no other gallery has become more synonymous with this popular trend than Mondo. Virtually a household name, Mondo laid the groundwork and foundation for many other online galleries and shops catering to modern collectors and art enthusiasts. Mondo started as a small T-shirt stand at the Alamo Drafthouse in Austin, Texas. They soon moved on to selling licensed art posters and prints in conjunction with various film screenings they held in Austin and around the world, eventually paving the way for dozens of new galleries to put their own brand on licensed works of art.

Founded by Justin Ishmael, Mitch Putnam, and Grammy Award winner Rob Jones, Mondo was established in 2012, with product archives reaching back to 2003. Having revolutionized contemporary and classic movie posters and given life to a whole new class of memorabilia collecting, Mondo is one of the leaders in bringing modern art to the masses.

Since its inception, Mondo has grown into a multifaceted company that not only sells T-shirts, posters, and original art, but also releases licensed soundtracks, action figures, statues, VHS reissues, enamel pins, and an array of additional merchandise. Mondo boasts a giant roster of artists, designers, and partner companies who together offer something for just about everyone.

Artists such as Olly Moss, Laurent Durieux, Jason Edmiston, Ken Taylor, Tyler Stout, and Martin Ansin are just a few of the regulars that have frequently created artwork for Mondo. An array of previously unknown artists and graphic designers have flourished and seen a rise in their fan base, having been given the widespread notoriety and exposure that comes with

having worked with Mondo.

Mondo's permanent gallery events have featured original and licensed art from a variety of artists showcasing themes such as Disney and Marvel, among others.



Unique artist solo galleries are another recurring focus in the gallery space, highlighting a collective of work or theme. Solo galleries for fan-favorites Laurent Durieux and Jason Edmiston, for example, proved to be huge successes. Edmiston's "Eyes Without a Face" series is legendary and has been continued with new art added to an already-impressive catalog that has endless potential.

Raising the bar in 2014, the company introduced the first annual MondoCon fan event. It was a weekend dedicated to all things pop culture with a long list of veteran Mondo artists, special film engagements, surprise poster

reveals, local Austin food truck vendors, special drinks, exclusive merchandise, and an array of programming events. This was a great unifying experience for those within the collecting community to socialize and celebrate their similar passions.

The majority of what is available to purchase from Mondo is released online in random time blocks where the public is notified via social media usually the same week, or at times, the day prior. This doesn't call for much prep for those wishing to try and acquire new posters that are almost guaranteed to sell out. Many don't have time to leisurely sit at the computer and fervently hit the F5 button, which for many collectors is likely the most worn-out button on their keyboard.

If you have ever attempted to purchase a poster during one of the random online drops, the process may have proven to be discouraging or defeating. In fact, long-time devotees to Mondo, who early on were able to acquire a poster with little hassle or competition are now seeing the rise in the collective audience inhibit their ability to

score as many products sell out mere seconds after being made available. It may be a challenge, no doubt, but the reward of getting through checkout to the order confirmation page is truly a satisfying one! In the recent years, however, Mondo has been offering up quite a few time-released posters, which is a welcomed opportunity for those who wish to attain some new Mondo goodness and avoid the F5 abyss. Visit [mondotees.com](http://mondotees.com)

to see firsthand why Mondo has become a household name.



## SPOKE ART

### San Francisco/New York

Founded in 2010, Spoke Art operates in two locations – one in San Francisco's Lower Nob Hill neighborhood and the other in New York's Lower East Side. They also operate Paragon Press, their full-service custom frame and print shop, which is located in Berkeley, California. In addition to pop-up shows, conventions, and art shows in Miami, Chicago, and Los Angeles, the Spoke Art Galleries in both locations specialize in new contemporary art focusing on painting, illustration, and sculpture. Every month, the art space is rotated to feature a new exhibit from a long list of artists.

Like many of the competing galleries, Spoke Art offers a variety of fine art, original art, toys, collectibles, apparel, books, and magazines and has made successful decisions in terms of subject matter for their many exhibitions, shows, and licenses.



Touching on mainstream properties, cult classics of new and old, and focusing entirely on works by modern artists have made Spoke Art accessible and appealing to nearly every reach of the collective

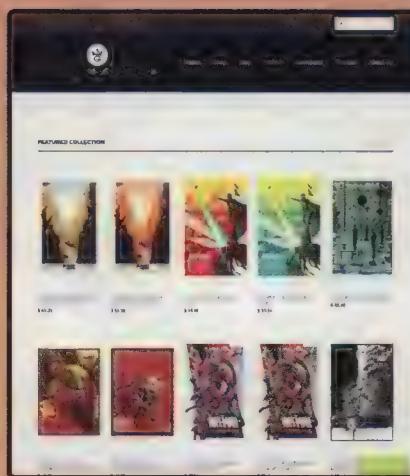
crowd. Recently, this company turned out an impressive gallery titled "Bad Dads – A Wes Anderson Gallery." Shows dedicated to David Lynch, Stanley Kubrick, and Martin Scorsese, featuring artists such as Eelus, Chuck Sperry, Scott Campbell, Joshua Budich, Tracie Ching, Sam Wolfe Connolly, and many more have firmly established Spoke Art among the top galleries out there. Visit [spoke-art.com](http://spoke-art.com) today.



## GREY MATTER ART

### Online Exclusive

Founded in 2013 in New York, Grey Matter Art is an online gallery specializing in licensed posters, merchandise, and apparel similar to many of the aforementioned galleries, simply on a smaller, more personal scale. This doesn't mean that Grey Matter hasn't made itself a well-known name, because they indeed have. In fact, they turn out some pretty great art from artists who are anything but small. The more intimate approach Grey Matter takes has proven successful and earned them a fan base and respect among poster enthusiasts because their willingness to listen to



what their customers want, and, in many times, have delivered valiantly. Outside of the various conventions that Grey Matter sets up at, the art produced is strictly available online. Visit [greymatterart.com](http://greymatterart.com) to see what is coming next.

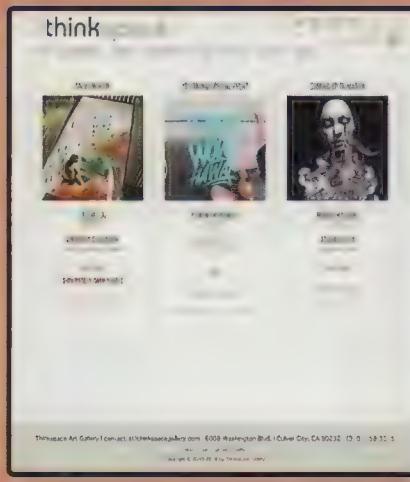


## THINKSPACE

### Culver City, California

Founded in 2005, Thinkspace has had a permanent address in Culver City, California. Strictly an art gallery, Thinkspace is different in many ways from all the rest here. While the other galleries may have original art and fine art as well, Thinkspace

is solely a venue for original works of art. As impressive as the work featured can be here, a fair warning should be in



place that this may not be for everyone. The art here is in the upper echelon of pric-

ing and the asking prices may shock most who decide to look through the gallery. Again, it's still very much worth taking a look around, and perhaps you'll decide that fine art collecting is your thing, and then realize that [thinkspacegallery.com](http://thinkspacegallery.com) is a jackpot.

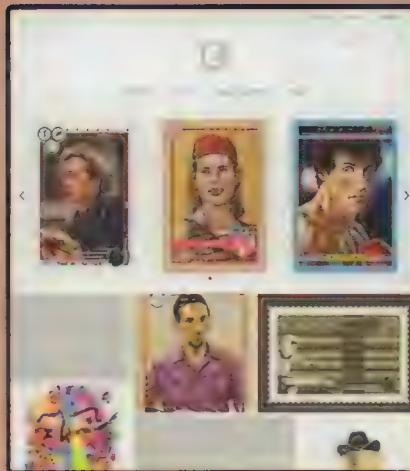


## GALLERY 1988

## Los Angeles, California

Gallery 1988 is a pop-culture themed gallery founded in 2004 that draws in large crowds and celebrities. Renowned for a wide variety of unique mixed media and original art, G1988 stands out among the other galleries, whose extremely diverse nature of art includes framed one-of-a-kind original art, a multitude of materials, and everything from toys and clay figures to dioramas, oils, screen print, pencil, ink, and just about everything you can imagine.

It's always fascinating to see everything that's presented at each new exhibit. G1988 wouldn't have



such a varied offering of art. If they can't create some cool exhibits over the years, some of the most popular and memorable are the Crazy4Cult shows, which just held its 10th-edition.

G1988 has held exhibits dedicated to the Coen Brothers, *Seinfeld*, "Story me," Mattel, "Femme Fatales," "Best Friends," Guillermo Del Toro, *Clue*, "Happy Food."

"Charts," *Ghostbusters*, *SNL*, and so many others. It's no wonder they're well known for their unique art, because they certainly aren't trying to limit themselves.

On account of the success of the Los Angeles gallery, a second location was added in Venice Beach in 2011. There is an abundance of art readily available and in stock at nearly every visit to the shop, and even if you don't decide to buy anything, you will certainly be enjoying checking it all out.

When you visit [nineteeneightyeight.com](http://nineteeneightyeight.com), be sure to allow enough time to go through all they have to offer.



## BOTTLENECK GALLERY

## Brooklyn, New York

Another well-known gallery that also tends to present a variety of eclectic mixed media art is the Bottleneck Gallery out of Brooklyn. They offer timed releases for certain projects and traditional print drops. Not only does Bottleneck carry a wide range of artist and mediums, but they also provide custom framing direct. This is a perk for those collectors who want to have a complete work of art ready to hang when it arrives – a big plus for convenience.

Bottleneck also sells pins, toys, and a variety of products from associated companies they partner with, including Acme Archives, Dark Ink Art, Fun City Ink, and the Mockingbird Foundation, an all-volunteer



not-for-profit organization which produces art, books, and all things Phish. Vice Press products for artists such as Francesco Francavilla and Godmachine are also sold at Bottleneck Gallery.

A special opportunity that Bottleneck offers to its customers is the ability to purchase a commissioned piece of art from a selection of the more well-known and loved artists in their repertoire. They call it Sketch Booth and for a price ranging from

\$50-\$75, you can purchase limited spots to have a sketch done by artists such as Matt Ferguson, Dave Perillo, Chris Skinner, Raid71; and more.

Bottleneck Gallery has treated its fan base to everything from *Lord of the Rings* and *The Simpsons* to *Stranger Things*. No gallery can truly corner the market on anything these days, so to stay ahead and be enticing to the collecting community, galleries such as Bottleneck carry a wide variety. Although they don't have quite the same level of inventory as G1988, they still keep time with the other galleries featured here and are sure to have something for most everyone's liking. Visit [bottleneckgallery.com](http://bottleneckgallery.com) to check them out for yourself.



## In Closing:

Whether someone is a pop-culture enthusiast, or simply enjoys a certain unique design style or specific artist archetypes,

there is definitely no shortage of options to find what calls to you. Art is no longer monomaniacal and nearly every facet of pop culture, past and present, is being rep-

resented in some medium. This fervent appreciation of art has reached a larger audience than ever before, and, as a collector, that's exciting!

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## SURVIVAL HORROR BOARD GAMES

by Shae Edwards

When it comes to survival, we have it pretty easy. We might claim that we're going to die if we lose our Wi-Fi for an evening or our cable goes out or our phone is out of juice. However, unless we live in a world where those things are truly deadly, it's all hyperbole. Survival is a goal of life, but it's not something that rests in the forefront of our minds.

Maybe that lack of adrenaline in our real lives lends to why we find survival horror so damn fun. In the realm of media, we have so many offerings, be it post-apocalyptic books, films, television shows, or games. Board games, in particular, have skyrocketed in popularity

— and this author has a sneaking suspicion that it has a lot to do with the complexity of survival horror and the cooperative gameplay within.

No longer for children, these board games involve a great deal more strategy than the plain old luck we used to bet on. Survival horror game offerings have exploded since the late 1980s, when they first started appearing amidst gaming trends. In this *Board to Death*, we're going to look at a few of the modern offerings and detail what they're about and, of course, how they're played, and how to live through the horrors.



### ARKHAM HORROR

The classic survival horror game, *Arkham Horror*, debuted in 1987, before the height of the Cthulhu madness that has fans in its tentacle grip. It was based on the Chaosium role-playing game, *The Call of Cthulhu*, which was in turn based on the books by H.P. Lovecraft. The original pressing of the game sold out, and though Chaosium announced several reprints, the reprints never came, despite the game winning an Origin Award in '87. In 2004, the game was finally reprinted by Fantasy Flight Games, with simplified rules and an updated look.

The game is a classic race against time — players must defeat a threat called "The Ancient One," the horror which is randomly chosen at the beginning of the game. There are three essential steps. In the first, players must avoid monsters while collecting items and clues to help them win. In the second, players attempt to seal the gates that the horrors are coming from (the more active, the better). Finally, players must seal the final gates, lest the true Horror be unleashed upon all of Arkham. Players can win in one of three ways: close all of the gates on the board

[though each must have a gate token], seal six gates, or defeat the Ancient One, a task that sounds as daunting as it is.

However, it's not that simple [when is it ever when you're saving the world?]. Players choose which investigator character they'd like to be and must collect spells, weapons, items, allies, and special privileges to assist in their task. They also must keep track of both the Doom Track and the Terror Track. The Doom Track covers how close the Ancient One is to awakening and the Terror Track gauges the overall morale of the Arkham townspeople. As the terror grows, the population dwindles, leaving the town ripe for the plucking and increasing the monsters you must face.

The other interesting facet of the game is the turn system. Each player's turn has five(!) phases: Upkeep, Movement (whether in this world or the Dreamlands), Arkham Encounters (whether helpful or harmful), Other World Encounters (depending upon whether the investigator is in Arkham or the Dreamlands), and Mythos, the dreaded final phase where monsters spawn and trouble starts.

With a variety of tokens and cards, players can cast spells, close gates, fight monsters, and use allies and artifacts to save Arkham. Though we've greatly simplified the play here, it's not hard to see why *Arkham Horror* is both a classic and modern hit. With gameplay that can reach hours and an engrossing good

time, the game is perfect for a cold, dark night in. You can find *Arkham Horror* and all of its expansions at Fantasy Flight's Web site (MSRP \$59.95). If *Arkham Horror* is too daunting to start, the game *Eldritch Horror* [also by FFG] adapts a lot of Arkham's ideas, but simplifies them and adds a set of their own for a bit faster ride through chaos and fear.

### LAST NIGHT ON EARTH/ DEAD OF WINTER

These two games, *Last Night on Earth* and *Dead of Winter* couldn't be more different, but are grouped together due to their theme: zombies! To begin with, *LNOE* [from Flying Frog Games; MSRP \$59.95] is a game where players are pitted against at least one other player, to start with, and is for two to six players. Cooperative play is always between four Heroes [which are archetypes, like the Nurse, the Football Player, etc.] and played by up to four players in a six-player game. Depending upon the number of players, the zombies are controlled by one to two player(s) who move them and set them after the Heroes. The zombies can win by killing at least two Heroes, and the Heroes must kill a specified number of zombies [depending upon the mode]. The nice thing about this game is that it features two modes of play — Basic, for new players or a quicker play, and Advanced,

for older hats or those who've tried their hands at slaying zombies before.

With *LNOE*, the Basic game is played with turns. Heroes have 15 turns [hours, tracked by a "Sun Tracker"] to slay 15 zombies, which spawn from X-marked pits on



the board. There are a variety of factors to add a bit of chance to the game, like placing the game board pieces down randomly, blind choice of the Hero characters, and two chance decks, one Hero, one Zombie.

The turns are basic, with several phases. The zombie players move the countdown clock, draw new cards, move the zombies, respawn, and attack [if possible]. The Hero players follow a similar turn, but have the opportunity to exchange items with each other [if on the same space] or search an area for useful items [cards]. They also have a different type of attack added into their own besides melee – ranged, which requires a specific weapon type.

Overall, the Basic game is more than enough to keep most players busy learning the game. The Advanced game includes tiles for the board, the introduction of Scenarios and ... wait for it ... explosives! It's a blast!

The best part of the game? If a player loses their Hero [or Heroes, depending], they come back to join the zombie players to terrorize the remaining Heroes, guiding them through what could be their last night ... on Earth!

*Dead of Winter* (Plaid Hat Games; MSRP \$59.95) is a zombie game, but requires a lot more cooperative play, with the possibility of betrayal within your group! In *Dead of Winter*, you are survivors stranded in a deadly winter scenario, in the aftermath of a zombie apocalypse. Not only does the group have an objective, but so do you. Each player has a secret objective, and only players who have achieved this objective can win the game.

Like *LNOE* and *AH*, *DoW* features a countdown clock, but also includes a morale track. Players start the game by drawing a scenario. Each scenario has an objective and a board setup, as well as a general time to complete [Short, Medium, Long]. Survivor cards, held by the players, act as a character sheet of sorts, giving character stats as well as a context [the art of the Mall Santa might be a personal favorite]. A helpful turn guide, too, is included for each player.

*DoW* has two segments for each turn – the player phase and the colony phase. In the first phase, two actions happen before the players can react: a crisis is drawn, and players roll their action dice [the numbers they can use in their turn to take actions]. It's then that the players take their turns.

Obviously, in their own turns, players not only have to keep the crisis and the objective of the colony in mind, but also their own. After all, no one wants to *lose* a zombie apocalypse. With the awesome potential of betrayal, the spreading of zombie bites, and potential exile,

*DoW* is less about surviving the apocalypse, but more surviving humanity *after* it's passed.

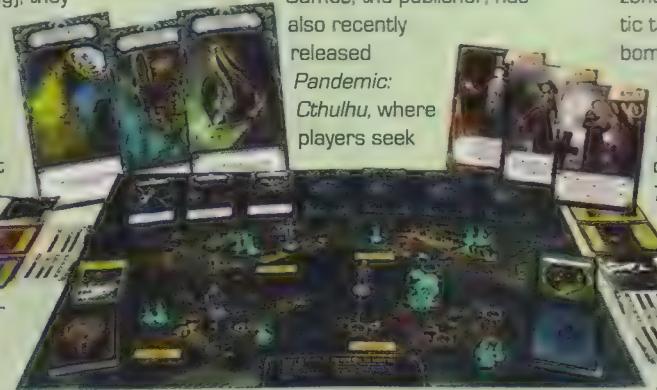
*Dead of Winter* is available on Plaid Hat Games' Web site, as well as its recent expansion, *The Long Night*.

#### *Pandemic/Pandemic: Cthulhu*

*Pandemic* has to be mentioned here thanks to the fact that it's a fast fun and unique game – instead of a game where you're a zombie, it's a game where you're a disease. In the truest version of a cooperative game, as players only play against the diseases and not each other. *Pandemic* features a disease control center that's attempting to contain diseases before they spread into outbreak levels. Players can have so many turns to win, and if they don't well, the world falls to *Pandemic* Z-Man

Games, the publisher, has also recently released

*Pandemic: Cthulhu*, where players seek



to stop the Elder Gods instead of disease.

*Pandemic* and its *Cthulhu* version both retail for \$39.95 and can be found online and where most games are sold.

#### *Level 7 (Escape)*

*Level 7* deserves to be on this list simply due to its concept alone – prisoners terrorized by aliens beneath the Earth's surface, all in an isolated experiment. Spooked yet? Mind conjuring images of dark spaces and cramped corridors and alien attackers? Good! *Level 7* promises just that.

Like other games, though, *Level 7* features scenarios and character cards [though simplified for streamlined play] and two stats that are tracked and changed during the game: Fear [your character's personal level of terror] and Threat [how dangerous you are to subterraneans and your fellow players]. The player turns are simplified as well – draw Adrenaline cards [but don't run out or else you're "Knocked Out"], take your movement and actions, and then "Trigger Events." Every turn, the triggering of events can spike



or a character out of control or out of their mind.

Unlike the other games on this list, *Level 7* is played blind. A player doesn't know what tile he or she is going to step on until their character steps on it [they draw a tile and set it face down on the board]. Anything could be lurking on that tile – disaster, death, or a terrifying Hybrid alien/human, or it could just be a good old empty tile. *Level 7 (Escape)* is available now from Privateer Press and retails for \$54.99.

#### *This War of Mine*

Based on the eponymous hit indie computer game, *This War of Mine* (Awaken Realms) is worthy of mention here, despite not being 100-percent horror. Played in a post-war zone, the setting seems more post-apocalyptic than anything else, as all you know are the bombed-out buildings around you, and the

desperate survivors trying to do the same thing as you: survive. The idea behind the game is cooperative to a point. The game calls on echoes of Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*, sometimes needing players to take drastic measures to live, measures that might not be popular with the others [or yourself].

*This War of Mine* had a tentative release date of February 2017, but as of publication date, no update was available. Visit [www.thiswarofmineboardgame.com](http://www.thiswarofmineboardgame.com) for info on the game's release.

If anything is evident, there are a lot of survival horror games available for the board player to pick up and enjoy with their friends. Most of the games require at least two players, so phone up a friend and spend a Saturday night testing your survival skills in a way that doesn't require actual serial killers or zombies. 



**Did You Know?** Upper Deck recently released a *Legendary: Big Trouble In Little China* board game, where players can recruit their favorite characters to defeat the evil Lo pan. SRP on this game is \$49.99.

# THE HOUNDS SCOUNDS

by Jerry Smith



For nearly 20 years, vocalist/songwriter Corey Taylor has been a musical mainstay, fronting the worldwide phenomenon band Slipknot as well as the more rock-oriented Stone Sour. Grammy winner, author of multiple books, and public speaker, Taylor, a devout horror fan, made his acting debut in Rob Hall's 2015 *Fear Clinic*. He followed that with a turn in a fun over-the-top role in Slipknot bandmate Shawn "Clown" Crahan's directorial debut, *Officer Downe*. To say that Corey refuses to slow down would be an understatement, with upcoming tours and a new album, and the list going on and on. As an introduction to Jerry Smith, whose Note and Blood column (where he speaks to musicians who love all things horror) will be running on HorrorHound.com in the coming months, we thought Corey Taylor would be the perfect interview to kick things off.

**HorrorHound:** Jumping right in, what's your favorite area of horror? Everyone has their kind of subgenre of what they're into.

**Corey Taylor:** That's a damn good question man, to be honest, I don't think I've ever really thought about it before. I've always been a massive fan of the whole genre. Not to say that I don't have my favorite bits, but you know, honestly just thinking about it, I think my favorites might be genre mash-ups if that makes any sense. One of my top five favorite movies is *From Dusk Till Dawn*. The reason I love it is because it's such an amalgam of different genres, you know? It starts out as a Peckinpah-like fucking road movie, and then slowly becomes the kind of righteous, amazing vampire movie you always wanted to see. I can

remember being in the theater going, "Oh my god. This is wonderful." I saw that thing like seven times in the theater. I guess it was just the first movie that comes to mind when you think of something like that. Not to say that there aren't any movies that might have done the same kind of concept, where it was a mash-up. You know the movie that comes to mind for me is the original *Fright Night*, it had that hint of humor to it, but it was still really gory horror, you know? Chris Sarandon was fucking awesome. I remember movies like *The Lost Boys* that transcended the genre because they weren't afraid to get away with what was, at the time, big risks. Movies like *Nightbreed* were ones I've always been into as well. The whole feel of it was always just so cool to me.

**HH:** Have you seen the *Nightbreed* director's cut, by any chance? It's a completely different movie. It's so good.

CT: I remember that was the thing when it first came out. Everyone was expecting it to be this completely different thing, and even Barker was like, "They destroyed my movie." I liked the original version, for what it was worth. That movie is kind of beautiful, like it was one of those movies that kind of turned it on its head.

It's almost like the *Super Friends* meet Tod Browning's *Freaks*. The monsters have to save the day. That's fucking genius.

**HH:** That's what I love about it. The monsters are the good guys, you know? WE'RE the bad guys in that film. Are you a big fan of French Extreme or Italian film?

CT: I would have to say yes, just for the fact that I like the older stuff from that genre. The stylized stuff I always enjoy because I knew it wasn't going to be the same standard-by-the-numbers cinematography. Some of that stuff has a danger of just kind of falling in the footsteps of the path of least resistance, basically. When you watch, especially some of the French stuff, and seeing the Truffaut influence come out, the elongated takes, the building of the despair and everything, that's where you really realize that you're watching something different. With the Italian stuff, I'm hard-pressed for an example, but you kind of see where the ultraviolence comes from but not in a silly way. That's one of the reasons why I'm so happy that one of the good things about the

Internet is it's been able to sustain the genre in a way that I don't think people even realize.

**HH:** During its kind of initial release, I know that VOD was really looked down on, but now, like you're saying, these days a lot of really great films can be discovered on that platform, whereas in the '80s and so on, if it was straight to VHS, everyone would just walk past it.

CT: Exactly, but, then again, if you look at it, some of those movies were some of the biggest influences around. Tarantino is a perfect example of that; between the drive-in and the video rental is where he kind of cut his teeth and developed his style. It's interesting to see where the influence comes from. For me, I can remember walking by the box for *Rawhead Rex* many times and going, "What the fuck is that thing?" You know? And then seeing it and realizing it's like, "Whoa, OK. I mean, this is interesting." I wouldn't have seen *Dead Alive* if it wasn't for the box. I had no idea who Peter Jackson was at the time. So, there was stuff like that where you were like, "Oh, this stuff is kick-ass!" So, I think there's something to be said about VOD, where that's the kind of new way of those little discoveries.

**HH:** I remember being a kid at my local video store, and not knowing what *Evil Dead 2* was, but seeing that skeleton cover, or what *Rocky Horror Picture Show* was, thinking it was going to be like some real gory movie with those blood red lips on there ... and then renting both them and having like the opposite kind of experience.

CT: Absolutely. I had that same experience with *The Howling 3*, which is a very strange film. That and *Slumber Party Massacre 2*, it's so bizarre! It has nothing to do with the cover. It was like Russian roulette, but you were almost always entertained.

**HH:** With Slipknot, I know you guys have your reasons for the masks, and, visually, they're amazing. Did any of those choices come from an admiration of the genre or something else?

CT: I think, obviously, we took some inspiration from and were probably subconsciously influenced by some of the movies we'd seen. It might not have meant the same, it might not have had the same meaning for us, just from the standpoint of we didn't want to be that typical shock rock whatever. We wanted it to have a deeper meaning, but, at the same time, I think we were savvy enough to understand that, you know, to give it that more extremism, we pulled from that stuff that we loved growing up. Obviously, we were horror fans and using the stuff that we find uneasy definitely helped us. Every mask that I've had or have ever tried





to design has, maybe not visually, but subconsciously, tried to live up to that or have that same pop. Simple, yet really, really uneasy. I think it's the little things like that.

Obviously, Clown has such a visual mind, artistically and cinematically.

**HH:** Your music videos are just insane, nobody makes videos like your band. It seems like a lot of them are inspired by, not horror films per-

se, but a kind of darker aesthetic that goes with the music.

**CT:** I think that goes hand-in-hand, where a lot of bands were either one or the other, and we always try to be able to experiment with that artistic view and make sure there was always more content than just the surface. I think it's one of those things that is another reason why we've always stood out. We've always tried to make sure that the deeper you go, the more you're going to actually get.

**HH:** You've written multiple books, and you've been in at least two movies now with Clown's film *Officer Downe* and *Fear Clinic*. You've had and still have multiple bands. Is there anything that you haven't done yet that you really want to do?

**CT:** I'm writing a movie right now. It's a cross between *Halloween* and *Clue*. It's very much a mash-up. It's a horror comedy but with brutal kills ... like uncomfortable kills. I'm hoping people laugh at it because it's so my type of humor. People might not get it because I have such a dry sense of humor, but that's kind of one of the reasons why I think it works. I've never written a script before this. I'm working my way through and, hopefully once I'm done, I will sit down with somebody else and have them kind of put it into a form that's palatable. If I pull this off, it will be gory and funnier than hell. So, I'm hoping. That's what I'm shooting for. Gory and funnier than hell!

**HH:** My last question is about the status of Slipknot. I know you're gearing up for a new tour with Stone Sour and released a new album with that band not long ago. Is there any Slipknot news happening?

**CT:** We're kind of on hiatus for the next couple of years. I'm gearing up to actually go into the studio with Stone Sour [January], and then hopefully get the album out somewhere, maybe the end of May, right before summer. We're hoping to tour on that for a year and a half, and, towards the end of that, we'll start gearing up with Slipknot again. We're all kind of seeing what happens. That is the plan as of today. However, as I've said in the past, the best way to make God laugh is to speak your plans out loud. So, you just never fucking know at this point.

# THE HOUNDS SOUNDS REVIEWS

## Black Cat Attack - *Edraculation*



Canada's best horror-punk band return with *Edraculation*, their first album since 2014's *Bright Side of the Moon*. Not only does the album come with a ridiculously awesome name, but listeners are treated to some skits with the band's trademark humor to go along with the sonic mayhem contained within. If you hadn't guessed from the name of the album, the Oshawa-based band is engaged in a battle with vampires, who want to use the new record to blow up the sun! Throughout the album, guitarist and vocalist Valerie Knox bounces back and forth with bassist and vocalist Bryan Dickface

about spending "One Night on Vampire Beach" to avoiding certain death on "At Midnight We Kill B.C.A." While there isn't a bad song to be found on the album, the two that stand out the most are the band's tribute to *Predator*, "You're One Ugly Motherfucker," and the title track. We, as listeners, just have to hope that the band doesn't heed their own advice from "Guys! Don't Record the Next Record." *Edraculation* by Black Cat Attack are undoubtedly among the elite in the horror-punk scene today. *Edraculation* can be purchased at [BlackCatAttack.bigcartel.com](http://BlackCatAttack.bigcartel.com).



## Dr. Hell - *Apocalypse Boobs*

Some of the finest horror punk coming to us from across the pond has been courtesy of Dr. Hell, and now the band from the "Bloody Islands" are back with a new EP, the hilariously titled *Apocalypse Boobs*. Following the brief introduction track, which manages to include the EP's title into it, the band flies through the six tracks which prove that the spirit of horror punk is alive and well in 2017. Continuing off of the foundation they laid with their 2014 album, *Drunken Zombies*, songs like "Dead Girl" and "Hate" will have you

simultaneously tapping your foot along and head banging. While each track on *Apocalypse Boobs* could be lauded, "Wasted Horror Punkrock Princess" stands out as a track that any listener should fall in love with damned near right away! It's one of those rare tracks that manages to encompass everything we love about horror punk, and does it well. Dr. Hell has ensured listeners that they are a band to keep an eye on, and hopefully the wait for another album won't be as long as the time between *Drunken Zombies* and *Apocalypse Boobs*. Dr. Hell are signed to Undead Artists Records and *Apocalypse Boobs* can be purchased at [BloodyPunkRockBandcamp.com](http://BloodyPunkRockBandcamp.com).



## Horror of 59 - *Necroaggression*

Having toiled away in the Cleveland music scene, Horror of 59 is a band ready to bust out to a much larger audience and come out swinging with *Necroaggression*. Blasting through 10 tracks that barely surpass the 20-minute mark, Horror of 59 may at first seem like a Danzig-era Misfits sound-alike but is actually much more. Songs like "6 More Graves Until the Night" and "Bite Yer Neck" have a ferocity that jumps right out of the speakers. The flow of the album is frantic and in-your-face, like the best punk rock always is. Later in the album, the band becomes comfortable enough to mix things up, with "Werewolves of the Graveyard" not only serving as the closest thing to a ballad contained within but also as the longest track on the album just edging over the three-minute mark. If you're looking for an album that knows exactly what it is and has no reservations whatsoever about that, *Necroaggression* is a fine way to spend 20 minutes. Horror of 59 have independently released *Necroaggression* and you can grab a copy with the "Name Your Price" option at [Horrorof59.Bandcamp.com](http://Horrorof59.Bandcamp.com).



## Blood Shift - *Specters in the Mist*

Relatively new to the scene, the three-piece band known as Blood Shift came together in the summer of 2015. Just like Horror of 59, Blood Shift is bringing their blend of metal, punk, and death rock from Cleveland and has just released their first full-length album, *Specters in the Mist*. Led by vocalist and guitarist Elliot Rosen, the band brings a slower, almost sludge-like style to the genre. In fact, in a genre where most bands generally try to ape the style of either the Misfits or Blitzkid, Blood Shift feels like a breath of fresh air. Throughout the album, they carve out their own unique style, all while remaining familiar. The ballad-style track "Tomorrow Will Never Come" is strangely one of the most soothing songs I've ever heard out of the horror-punk scene. Immediately following is "Touched by the Reaper" which starts with an almost-western intro. Elsewhere on the album, songs like the title track and the excellent "From Beyond" shows an incredible amount of potential for Blood Shift, and I seriously recommend keeping an eye on the band going forward. Blood Shift is currently signed to Scoundrel Power Records and *Specters in the Mist* can be purchased at [BloodShift.Bandcamp.com](http://BloodShift.Bandcamp.com).

Reviews by Kyle Scharf

# PHANTOM CITY

## AN ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

# PHANTOM CITY

Creative

CREATIVE

by Dustin Fregiato

Phantom City Creative, PCC for short, is a Toronto-based studio that is at the heart of the alternative movie poster scene. The studio is run by two talented individuals: Justin Erickson, the creative director and the one responsible for the poster artwork, and Paige Reynolds, who handles the motion graphics.

Since 2010, PCC has been going non-stop, working with clients such as Mondo, HBO, Marvel, Lionsgate, Anchor Bay Entertainment, and more. In collaborating with these clients, PCC doesn't just stick to

**HorrorHound:** Let's get right down to the best aspect of your work. Your portfolio is filled with horror titles; why so?

**Justin Erickson (PCC):** I've been into horror since I was a little kid, so it comes as little surprise, it's what I'm drawn to now. I vividly remember combing the aisles of our neighborhood video rental shop, pouring over the VHS horror artwork. It made a huge impact on me. Horror properties also allow me, as an artist, to play with things that wouldn't fly in other genres. You can really have a lot of fun with horror film art.

**HH:** So, was your first work in the horror genre?

**PCC:** My first paying gigs weren't that fun, because I was fresh out of school and needed to take what I could get to survive. Most of my



first paying gigs weren't illustration at all, but graphic design. I look back fondly at it because it got me to where I needed to be so I could eventually start working at Rue Morgue magazine with Gary Pullin. Some of the first paying gigs were branding projects for dentists and food packaging projects. Sometimes, I'd be lucky and get an illustration job for a book cover where I could stretch my wings a bit.

**HH:** You mentioned Gary Pullin – I love his stuff. Who are the artists that have influenced your work?

**PCC:** A lot of my contemporaries inspire me every day. Guys like Gary Pullin, Jason Edmiston, Olly Moss, Matthew Woodson, Jay Shaw, Brandon Schaefer, Sam Wolfe Connelly, Julian Totino Tedesco, James Jean, and many, many more.

**HH:** That is quite the all-star lineup. Specifically, what about film poster artists?

**PCC:** My favorites would be Bob Peak, Drew Struzan, Saul Bass, and Reynold Brown.

**HH:** When comparing the world of theatrical release posters and alternative film artwork, have you seen any change in Hollywood since the alternative poster craze has taken off?

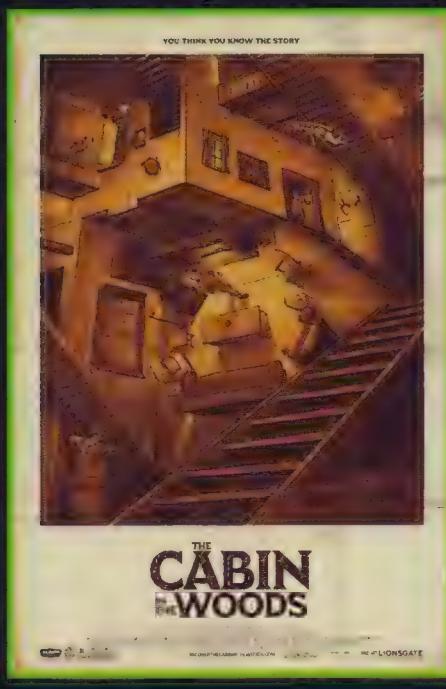
**PCC:** Definitely. There's always been good film art, but getting it to the final release stage

one medium, one niche, or one style; rather, it produces extraordinarily diverse art in the forms of original film posters, alternative film posters, gig posters, vinyl packaging, DVD/Blu-ray packaging, branding, and motion graphics for film. It should therefore come as no surprise that PCC's art is not only featured in the film *24X36: A Movie About Movie Posters*, but Justin Erickson is as well. To further highlight PCC's contribution to the genre, *HorrorHound* sat down with Justin to talk all things poster related.

has been tricky. Now that people are responding positively to these kinds of posters, clients are more willing to approve an idea and direction they would have shot down 10 years ago.

**HH:** When you are tasked with creating an official poster, such as your artwork for *What We Become*, *The Editor*, or *Last After Dark*, do you get to screen the film first? Do you feel any added pressure knowing that this could be the only piece of art the film receives?

**PCC:** I'd say I get the film to watch [half] of the time. Sometimes it helps, but sometimes it doesn't. Sometimes, watching the movie can overload you with too much information and you focus on the wrong details in the poster. There's no added pressure with working on official key art vs. an alt poster for me. I try to





make every piece of equal quality and my best work no matter what the end usage is.

**HH:** How do you come up with the ideas for your posters?

PCC: Before any sketches begin, the creative brief needs to be created. That basically sets up the foundation and direction for the project. From there, I have a defined set of parameters to focus on so I don't waste time going down a direction that won't go anywhere. As I mentioned, I don't always get to watch the movie I make posters for, but a synopsis is all I really need. After the creative brief is established, I begin working on the concepts with the film in mind, and explore different ways to make a poster that suits the movie and that will make people want to check it out. Depending on the budget, sometimes I send in upwards of 15 different poster concepts for the client to choose from. If I have the movie to watch, I'll do one watch-through while I make notes, then have it on in



HANNIBAL

the background as I work.

**HH:** What about with a project for vinyl packaging?

PCC: It's mostly the exact same process, but instead of creating a piece of artwork that speaks to the plot, I try to make it more about the mood of the music. If I have the music available, I'll have it on repeat while making the art to help me make the art mood appropriate.

**HH:** In an age where so many artists stick to one distinct style or layout, you manage to keep each piece of artwork fresh; how so?

PCC: I want to give every poster its own flavor.



because I think every property needs a different approach to be its most successful. A style that works for a slasher film might not work for a quiet suspense thriller. For every project, I let it define the look of the final product. Even before getting into film art, I've always had the most fun with experimenting with new styles and techniques. Sometimes, I wish I just had a "house style," though. Figuring out the style and look of every project adds a lot of time to the overall process.

**HH:** Well, speaking of experimenting with new techniques and styles for each poster, could you walk us through your creative process on the *Hannibal* poster you did for Mondo? I know a few of us at HorrorHound are bigtime fans of the show and this poster.

PCC: *Hannibal* is one of my favorite shows as well, and I was overjoyed to be asked to create an official piece of artwork for the show. I try to focus on the most important aspect of

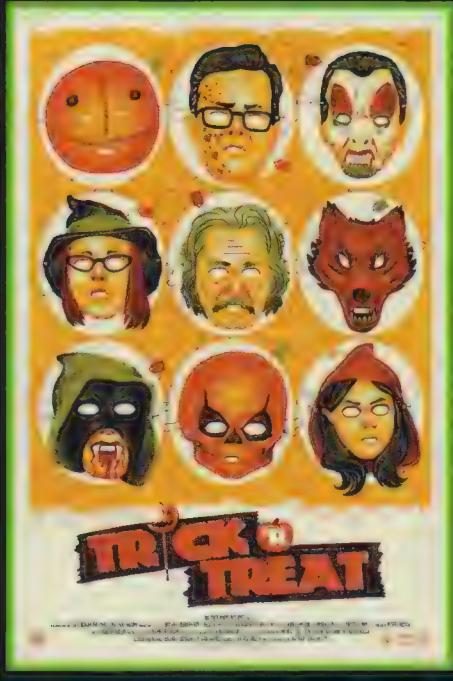


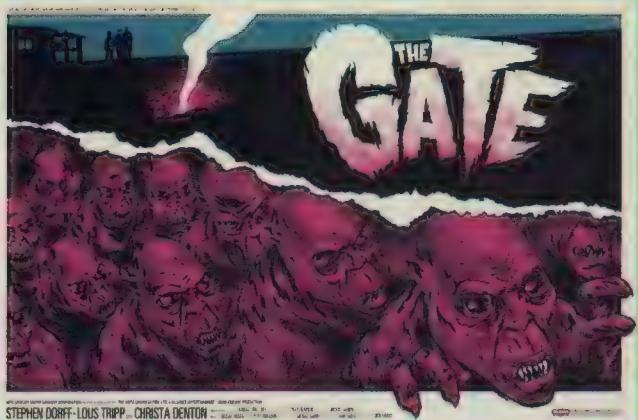
something when I work on concepts, because I'm a huge fan of minimalism. While watching the show, I was always captivated by Mads Mikkelsen as Hannibal, so I knew that I wanted the poster to focus on him. Presenting the poster as two pieces, one as his "person suit" and one as his true self, as Will Graham perceives him, seemed like a really fun way to illustrate the show.

**HH:** Are you selective on the properties you work on?

PCC: I have to be selective with what projects I take on. I only have so many hours in the day and can only create so much in one year. I have to make sure the budget works for me, since at the end of this day I have bills to pay, and my time is worth something to me. If it's a job or a client I believe in, I always try to make something work.

**HH:** Once you receive a project and have your idea, what process do you use to actu-





ally create the imagery?

PCC: The process for every project is roughly the same. First, I get the brief to do my sketches. I like to draw a few dozen thumbnails concepts to work my ideas out, then once that's finished, I scan them and refine my favorites. I work on a Cintiq, so everything after the sketch stage is digital. Once the client approves a sketch, I enlarge it to the required size and refine it once more. If it's a complicated one, I'll do a color rough to figure out the tricky stuff up front, then continue refining until it's at a place where I can show the client. Then the artwork is off for revisions, and it's a back and forth until the piece is a completed!

*HH:* After releasing a piece of artwork, has there ever been a fan reaction that surprised you?

PCC: There's been a couple, yeah. Most of what I work on I think people are going to





hate, but I think that's common amongst a lot of artists. The one that comes to mind immediately would be *The Lost Boys*. I wanted to try something different, so I illustrated a vampire bat with David's earring. I thought it was a fun little idea but people haaaaated it. Oh well, I still like it!

**HH:** Ouch. What about someone associated with a film, have they ever reached out to you

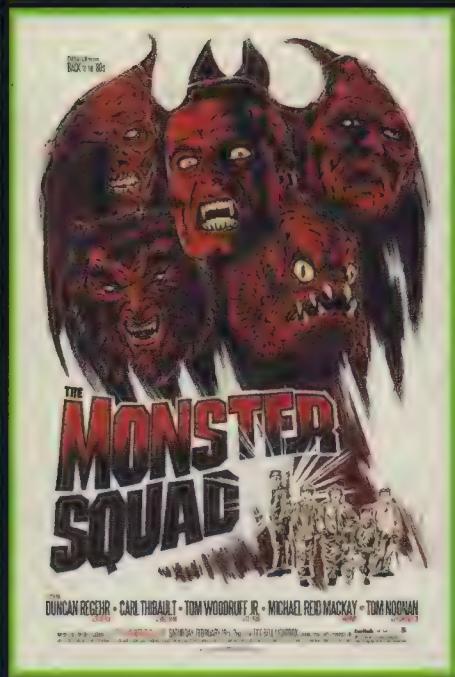
PCC: A few times, yeah. The biggest one I'd say would be the writer of the *Back to the Future* franchise, Bob Gale. He wrote me a very nice e-mail about my *Back to the Future* posters, and included a picture of the posters hanging on his wall.

*HH:* Wow. That is quite the honor. Moving away from alternative art for a second, what was PCC's role in the film *Monster Brawl*?

PCC. For *Monster Brawl*, we teamed up with some great Canadian filmmakers at Foresight Features. They were one of the first clients to give PCC a shot, which I'll always be thankful for. We handled all of the motion graphics in the film since it was set up as a wrestling match, as well as created the key art advertising the movie.

**HH:** Well, as a Universal Monster fan and an avid pro-wrestling fan, *Monster Brawl* was a dream mash-up for me. You have definitely been able to work on a ton of properties. It is probably because you were creating alternative film posters and working with Mondo long before the hobby reached the peaks it has today. What factors do you attribute to the rise of the alternative film artwork scene?

PCC: I think alternative film artwork showed people that there's a different way to advertise movies than just the basic "Photoshopped" floating heads. It also harkens back to a time where film art was illustrated and exciting, and I think people appreciate that. It gives them more to chew on than another boring photo of the actor you've seen a hundred times.



**HH:** HorrorHound also recently sat down with Kevin Burke, the director of the film *24X36: A Movie About Movie Posters* to discuss the film. Did you have a role in it?

PCC: I'm honored to say [that] I'm one of the artists that Kevin Burke decided to include in his poster documentary. There's a staggering amount of talent in the movie, so to be counted among them is an honor.

**HH:** Well, as one of the leading artists in the resurgence of poster artwork, you definitely should have been included. Are there any upcoming projects you can let us in on?

PCC: I can't divulge specific titles, but I can say there are a few projects that I'm really excited about coming up shortly. Lots of record packaging and posters that I had a lot of fun working on.

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# THEY CAME FROM THE KRYPT!

by Jon Kelley

Just picture it: you're making your way through the dark and dusty passageway in an ancient Aztec temple when you hear something. Not a constant noise, but one with a slight pause between each sound. It's a scraping sound ... almost like something dragging. Then something slowly comes out of the darkness ... you try to scream but can't because the dusty decayed hands of Popoca have wrapped themselves around your throat and are squeezing the life out of you! Pretty scary, huh? Wait, who, or what, is Popoca? Read on, mis amigos!



In previous Kryptic entries, we've covered a variety of titles from South of the Border produced in the late '50s and early '60s. Most of them played their hands very seriously, with lots of atmosphere and style that compared favorably with the Universal classics. Many featured traditional monsters, such as vampires, but some featured their own, more homegrown monsters. For example, *La Llorona* [The Crying Woman] (1933) is based on an actual bit of Mexican folklore: a poor woman who has children from a wealthy man, but when he decides to marry another, she kills the children and herself, becoming a ghost known as the Crying Woman.

Another one of their creations was not completely original, but a different take on one of Universal's icons, the Mummy. In 1957, a trilogy appeared about the character named Popoca, otherwise known as ... the Aztec Mummy! The series was directed by Rafael Portillo, who kept the same cast throughout all three features, and Ángel Di Stefani, an Italian-born actor who spent most of his career either in makeup and masks, gives the character of Popoca one mean screen presence.

*La momia azteca* [The Aztec Mummy] stars Ramón Gay as Prof. Almada, a scientist that wants to prove his theory about regressing a person's mind through hypnosis, where they can remember past lives. Even though the scientific community thinks he's crazy, his girlfriend believes in him enough to volunteer to let him experiment on her. This leads to the discovery of a hidden tomb and the recovery of a sacred breastplate and bracelet. Unfortunately, Popoca the mummy, sworn to protect these items, comes back to life to go searching for the thieves. Additionally, there's a criminal mastermind called the Bat lurking about, plotting to steal these recent finds. While the series starts off playing things relatively straight, before the first film ends, they seem to be more on par with the kiddie serials like *Flash Gordon* and *The Bat Man*. But that's not a bad thing, right? Right?

The sequel, *La maldición de la momia azteca* [Curse of the Aztec Mummy], picks up right where the last film left off. In fact, you could even start here, because Portillo & Co. show you pretty much everything that transpired via flashbacks. Even though the identity of the mysterious Bat has been revealed, he continues his quest for the Aztec bracelet and breastplate, rumored to reveal the location of some lost Aztec gold. Now helping Prof. Almada is a masked man called El Angel (bringing in the element of the masked wrestler/crime fighter, a la El Santo). Of course, whenever the Aztec treasures

are stolen, Popoca is on the move!

The final chapter is *La momia azteca contra el robot humano* [The Robot vs. the Aztec Mummy], which again features a nice flashback recap of the previous two chapters and was ultimately immortalized on *MST3K*. That said, out of the three, this one is the best. In fact, it's a riot. Our favorite shriveled-up corpse gets to do battle with a human robot, which is clearly just a guy in a robot costume that looks like it was made from painted cardboard with the guy's face inside the robot's "head." It is supposed to be a robot with a human brain, so it works in theory, right? The evil scientist has created this mechanical monster to stop Popoca when he comes looking for the Aztec treasure that he had stolen. You can't make this stuff up, folks. And even as cheesy as the entire movie is, the titular climactic battle is a must-see slice of Chihuahua.

Sure, the trilogy features poorly written, paper-thin plot-lines, juvenile acting, and one of the goofiest looking robots around. But Popoca the mummy is pretty damn cool looking, resembling someone who's been lying around for thousands of years, similar to the mummies of Guanajuato as opposed to the traditional bandage-wrapped menace. When he first appears on-screen, the sight of his decayed and sunken face is pretty startling. He may move slowly, but there's no denying his strength. And, if you think these are just too goofy, when is the last time you watched the Universal Mummy sequels?

There's also plenty of history behind these films! Lead actor Ramón Gay was murdered by the angry husband of actress Evangelina Elizondo in 1960. Actress Rosita Arenas, who plays Almada's girlfriend/wife, would go on to star in two classics of Mexican horror films, *El espejo de la bruja* (The Witch's Mirror) (1962) and *La Maldición de la Llorona* (Curse of the Crying Woman) (1963). Finally, pretty much the whole beginning of the first movie was 'borrowed' by Jerry Warren and spliced together with parts of *La casa del terror* (1960) and new material featuring Lon Chaney Jr. to make *Face of the Screaming Werewolf* in 1964.

So let's recap. We have a great-looking (and very different) mummy, some masked crusaders and villains, little bit of crime drama, crazy characters, and a seemingly never-ending storyline! Any one of these films would be perfect for a Turkey Day marathon, or maybe you have a youngster that you want to slowly bring into the horror fold. Like the Universal films, these are safe enough for them, but still offer some good thrills and some fun action. Just make sure you don't steal the breastplate and bracelet, or you really will Discover the Horror!





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In each issue of *HorrorHound*, we take the time to look back on one film and induct it into our own little trophy case of excellence. The *HorrorHound* Hall of Fame is often dictated by an issue theme or anniversary. Not to say the film isn't deserving of the honor beyond that criteria, but the order in which they are chosen is. This issue, we had a bit of a dilemma. Our two central themes include *King Kong*, which has already been inducted, and *MST3K*, which regularly spotlighted films not of the caliber to be included in such honors. Considering this, there wasn't a title to fit our typical selection process for this issue's Hall of Fame honoree, so we decided to pick a movie off our list that just simply deserved it – Brian De Palma's 1974 horror rock opera, *Phantom of the Paradise*.

How exciting a project is it to discuss a film that means so much to you – the viewer, writer, whathaveyou – knowing full and well that maybe, just maybe, someone is learning about this very movie right now, by reading the words on this page? A mixture of *Phantom of the Opera* and *Faust* (with a little *The Picture of Dorian Gray* thrown in for good measure), the story of this De Palma classic follows music composer Winslow Leach (William Finley) as he attempts to produce his musical masterwork – a rock opera titled (appropriately enough) *Faust* – for a high-level record producer known simply as Swan. The music is so perfect that it *must* serve as the musical to open his latest club, the Paradise. Unfortunately for Winslow, Swan is quite sinister, not only stealing Winslow's music, but framing him for a crime he didn't commit, which sends him to prison. Upon trying to break out of his confinement so he can reclaim his life work, he is horribly injured – disfigured and unable to sing. To make matters worse, the only woman he deemed worthy enough to tackle *Faust*, Phoenix (played by *Suspiria*'s Jessica Harper), has been lured into Swan's horrid web of deceit and sin. The demonic record producer tricks the now-deformed "Phantom" Winslow into an agreement to help finish his musical and open the club with the star singer he so covets. Further deceit and heartbreak unfolds as the majestic

Phoenix is used and discarded, while Winslow is further humiliated and lied to as a knarly glam-rock "singer" known as Beef (played by the brilliantly over-the-top Gerrit Graham) is brought in to replace the angel-voiced songstress – the final straw that results in our Phantom fully embracing his descent into madness and doing whatever possible to destroy the evil Swan once and for all.

What makes *Phantom of the Paradise* so darn interesting isn't the story, the director, or the music (although each are worthy

# HorrorHound HALL OF FAME PHANTOM of the PARADISE

**He's been maimed and framed,  
beaten, robbed and mutilated.  
But they still can't keep him  
from the woman he loves.**



Golden Globe nominations for Original Song/Score. The film itself slowly developed a cult following, which was epitomized in 2005 as a fan-organized convention titled "Phantompalooza" was held in Winnipeg, where most of the cast appeared and even performed songs on stage for fans (a second event was held a year later as well). While most of the cast never crept past B-movie obscurity, director Brian De Palma went on to become one of the most significant directors of our time, having helmed such classics as *Scarface*, *Carrie*, *Carlito's Way*, *The Untouchables*, *Mission: Impossible*, and *Dressed to Kill*. The cult status of *Phantom* continues to grow with toys based on the title character, and the music often finds itself on best of soundtrack lists by some of the most influential names in music and Hollywood alike (one track was even covered on *HorrorHound*'s own soundtrack cover album, *It's Only a Movie*, by Dead Dick Hammer).

Is *Phantom of the Paradise* for everybody? Absolutely not. But it exists, and we have to thank the higher powers that it does. Movies like this – they need to be made. They spark the viewer's imagination to want, desire, or expect more than the ordinary. To think past the mundane and hope for something striking and original. At the end of the day, *Phantom of the Paradise* has officially become one of the few titles housed in the *HorrorHound* Hall of Fame because it dared to be something more.



by Nathan Hanneman

of their own praise]. The most intriguing aspect of this film is that the soundtrack – the music that binds this film together – was written (and mostly sung) by Swan himself, who was portrayed on-screen by real-life musician Paul Williams. Williams is a Grammy and Academy Award winner for his work on 1979's *The Muppet Movie*, for which he wrote the song "Rainbow Connection." Williams (even at the time *Phantom* was released) was a renowned songwriter, having penned hits for such musical acts as David Bowie, Carpenters, Barbra Streisand, and Three Dog Night – not to mention creating the theme song to the popular television series *The Love Boat*. In fact, the soundtrack for *Phantom* is as Hall of Fame worthy as the movie itself, but prior to the film's release, the producers ran afoul of Led Zeppelin. Turns out the film's "Swan Song Enterprises" was wrought with copyright issues from Led Zeppelin's similarly named record label, and the film had to be edited to replace all the Swan logos with the now-cult brand "Death Records."

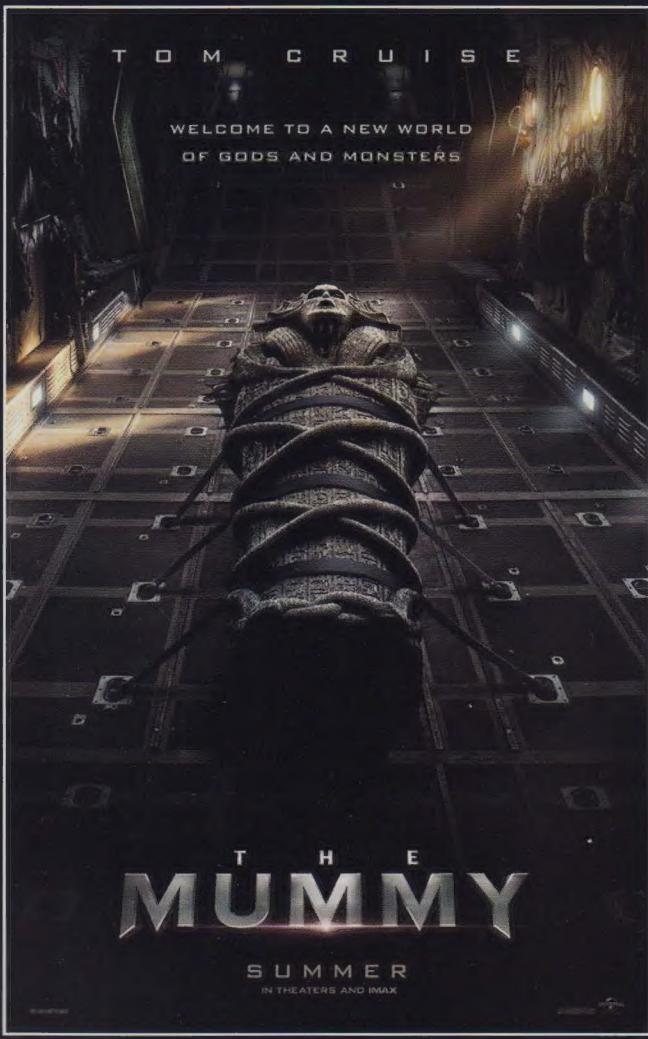
As for the film itself? *Phantom* flopped theatrically, opening in the US on October 31, 1974. The soundtrack seemed to fair better, becoming certified Gold in Canada and receiving both Academy Award and



# NEXT ISSUE

Universal Studio's 1932 horror classic *The Mummy* is one of cinema's most enduring feature films, if not one of the studios' greatest commodities. Its popularity was so high that it resulted in an unprecedented number of remakes and sequels, including four Universal-produced movies in the 1940s, plus the 1955 Abbott and Costello spoof. No less than four Hammer-produced Mummy features were filmed throughout the 1960s, and, most recently, the series was relaunched in 1999 when it enjoyed two of its own sequels and four spin-offs [plus an animated series]. In 2017, this classic Universal Monster celebrates its 85th anniversary, as well as a new film starring Tom Cruise, set to hit theaters on June 9th. Next issue features an extensive guide to the *Mummy* film saga, including the original movies of the Silver Screen era, the Brenden Fraser-led action films of the 1990s, and the upcoming big-budget feature.

Additional content will include a look at *Alien: Covenant*, *The Devil's Candy*, plus our regular articles [such as toy, music, comic, and book news] – plus new installments of the *HorrorHound* Hall of Fame, Kitley's Krypt, Horror's Hallowed Grounds ... all available in two months!



# CONVENTION CALENDAR

## Horror Movie Conventions and Film Festivals:

### HorrorHound Weekend

March 17 thru 19th, 2017

Cincinnati, Ohio

[www.horrorhoundweekend.com](http://www.horrorhoundweekend.com)

[Featuring the cast of *Bates Motel*,  
Tobin Bell, and more!]

### Walker Stalker Con: Charlotte

March 25 thru 26th, 2017

Chicago, Illinois

[www.walkerstalkercon.com](http://www.walkerstalkercon.com)

[Featuring cast members from  
*The Walking Dead* and more!]

NOTE: San Francisco, Nashville, and  
Atlanta dates also available online.

### Mad Monster Party Con

March 25 thru 26th, 2017

Charlotte, North Carolina

[www.madmonster.com](http://www.madmonster.com)

[Featuring a *TCM Part 2* reunion,  
Ricou Browning, and more!]

### New Jersey Horror Con

March 31 thru April 2nd, 2017

Edison, New Jersey

[www.newjerseyhorrorcon.com](http://www.newjerseyhorrorcon.com)

[Featuring a *Frankenhooker*  
reunion, Ted Raimi, and more!]

### Cinema Wasteland

April 7 thru 9th, 2017

Strongsville, Ohio

[www.cinemawasteland.com](http://www.cinemawasteland.com)

[Featuring a *Night of the Living  
Dead* reunion and more!]

See Web sites for full lineups.  
Support your local shows!

### Monstercalooza

April 7 thru 9th, 2017

Pasadena, California

[www.monstercalooza.com](http://www.monstercalooza.com)

[Featuring Elvira, Ricou Browning,  
Barbara Steele, and more!]

### Chiller Theatre

April 21 thru 23rd, 2017

Parsippany, New Jersey

[www.chillertheatre.com](http://www.chillertheatre.com)

[Featuring a *Fright Night* reunion,  
George Hamilton, and more!]

### Spooky Empire

April 21 thru 23rd, 2017

Orlando, Florida

[www.spookyempire.com](http://www.spookyempire.com)

### Motor City Nightmares

April 28 thru 29th, 2017

Novi, Michigan

[www.motorcitynightmares.com](http://www.motorcitynightmares.com)

[Featuring George A. Romero, Sid  
Haig, Dee Snider, and more!]

### Midwest Haunters Convention

June 10 thru 11th, 2017

Columbus, Ohio

[MidwestHauntersConvention.com](http://MidwestHauntersConvention.com)

### Monster Bash

June 23 thru 25th, 2017

Mars, Pennsylvania

[monsterbashnews.com/bash.html](http://monsterbashnews.com/bash.html)

[Featuring Ricou Browning, Bert I.  
Gordon, and more TBA!]

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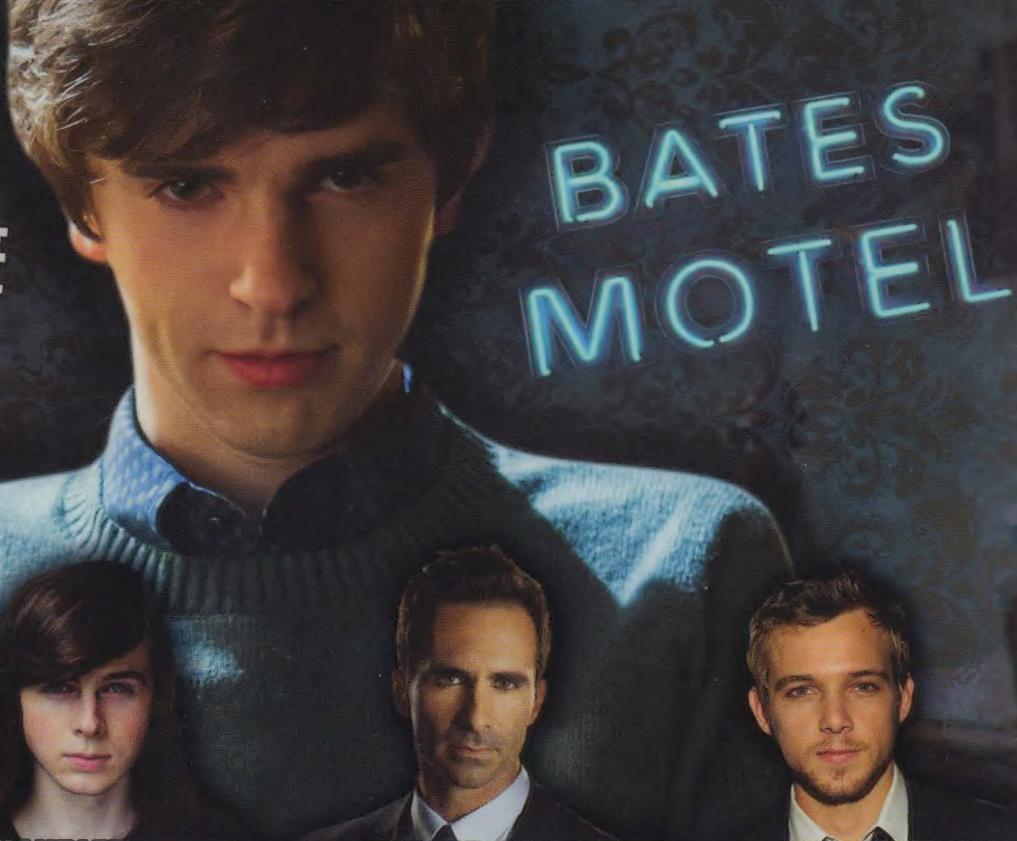
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